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THE
AMERICAN MECHANIC
AND
WORKING-MAN.

BY JAMES W. ALEXANDER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
WILLIAM S. MARTIEN.

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PREFACE.

It is now some years since these unpretending volumes were first published, under the somewhat whimsical name of CHARLES QUILL. The truth is, this was no more than a signature adopted in writing for a newspaper, and the title had become familiar to the class of persons whose benefit was sought. Besides, the author doubted whether the name of a clergyman would add any currency to lucubrations on such a subject.

To the great surprise of the writer, the books met with a ready sale, and the earlier one, at least, passed through three editions. It is no more than justice to say, that they owed much of their favour with the public to the valuable journal in which they at first appeared, and to its editor, Mr. William B. Kinney. That they never became part of the current of literature, is not to be wonder-

ed at: it is believed that they were not lost upon those for whom they were intended.

In offering a revised edition, the author begs leave to say once more, that his purpose will be answered, if these little volumes shall be read with pleasure in the shop of the mechanic, during intervals of labour, or in the evening when work is over. As the title shows, this is an offering to the working-man. The apprentice, the journeyman, and the master-mechanic will here find recreation and perhaps improvement. But it aims not so much at systematic instruction, as to quicken, to cheer, and to amuse.

It is no part of the plan of the work to bring down every thing to the level of the meanest capacity. Were this attempted, it would be lost upon the stupid and ignorant; while to persons of sense and improvement, all that is said will be clear enough, without any such degradation of the style. Even children are offended with the extreme of forced simplicity; especially as some of them know that if they never hear a hard word, they will never get beyond the easy ones. All

our knowledge is gained by mingling things yet unknown with such as are known already. It is thus we learn both to talk and to read. To attempt nothing but what is known, is to shun the water till one has learned to swim. In this persuasion, the author has not scrupled to introduce some things for the special benefit of more advanced readers; as, for example, the short essays on the cultivation of memory. For the same reason, a pretty free use has been made of the stores of English poetry. The working-man, no less than others, has a right to these treasures of his mother tongue, and may enjoy them with the greater freedom, as they require no previous scientific training to make them intelligible.

If, unhappily, the book should fall into the hands of any exceedingly grave critics, of such 'vinegar aspect', as to be scandalized by its occasional playfulness, the author will endeavour to be more staid in his future labours; remembering Boswell's famous anecdote. It is related of the great Dr. Clarke, that when in one of his leisure hours he was

unbending himself with a few friends in the most playful and frolicsome manner, he observed Beau Nash approaching, upon which he suddenly stopped;—"My boys (said he) let us be grave; here comes a fool."

Every page has been written with a most serious intent, and with a wish to see American working-men elevated in their own esteem, as the surest method towards their elevation in the esteem of others. Men who have so large a share in the government of the country, and who, from their facilities of intercourse, act so much in masses, deserve special attention from the philosopher and the statesman. Let the reader of these pages consider himself as in every sentence addressed by a hearty friend; for they have been thrown before the public with warm wishes in behalf of those whom the author seeks as his readers. They are therefore DEDICATED TO THE MASTER-WORKMEN, JOURNEYMEN, AND APPRENTICES OF AMERICA, by their wellwisher,

J. W. A.

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THE
WORKING-MAN.

I.

THE WORKING-MAN'S HOME.

“Tell me on what holy ground
May domestic peace be found?
Halcyon daughter of the skies,
Far on fearful wings she flies
From the pomp of sceptred state,
From the rebel's noisy hate.”

COLERIDGE.

THERE is a peculiar zest in the working-man's enjoyment of home. After weariness both of body and mind, he has a refuge at the close of the day—

“Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of home
Is sweetest.”*

There are languages, it is said, in which there is no such word as Home: in our mother tongue there is none more pregnant. It marks the sacred spot to which the cares and tumult of the world

* Coleridge.

do not reach; and where, except in cases of extreme depravity, its vices do not intrude. If there are gentle affections in the heart, they will break forth around the hearthstone; if there is an hour of tranquillity amidst perturbed life, it will be that which is spent with wife and children; if there is such a thing as friendship or love, it will be developed among these dearest associates.

Homeless men are seldom happy. If it was not good for man to be alone, even in Eden, it is bad indeed to be alone in such a fallen world as ours. But I will go farther, and assert the moral influences of domestic institutions. As it regards public offences, the man who has a wife and children has by just so much a greater stake in society. He has much both to gain and to lose. He cannot rise or fall alone. As it regards private virtue, it depends much on the kindly affections, and these are in their very shrine in the family circle. I think I have observed that when a man begins to go astray, he becomes less fond of home. The quiet look of the wife speaks daggers to his guilty conscience. The caresses of children are so many reproaches to the man who knows that he is wasting their very livelihood by his habits of dissipation. I think I have observed that the most rude and quarrelsome men are orderly and quiet when they go abroad with their wives and children. Such is the safeguard of virtue which is furnished by the influences of home.

I would have the home of the working-man his most delightful resort. To be so, it should be pleasing, even its outside. Why should it not be a well-proportioned cottage, with its windows overhung by sweetbrier and honeysuckle, and its roof shaded by spreading trees? Why should not the little door-yard be carpeted with grass, and hedged with shrubbery? These are not luxuries of the rich alone. Yet it is too common for people to think that because they are poor they must be slovenly and dirty. A little white-wash, a little paint, a little turfing, and a few days of labour about the vines and flowers, will serve to change the whole appearance of the humblest enclosure.

But let us enter the working-man's house; and in order to meet the extremest objection, I am supposing the case of the poorest. The walls should be white, the floors and wood-work should be scoured, the movables should be in their places, and no unsightly utensil should be more conspicuous than necessity requires. These are externals, but they bear directly upon what is more inward and more valuable. Everybody is more cheerful in a neat than in a disorderly room. When work is over, and every thing in its place, the visiter is more welcome, the husband's look is brighter, and an affectionate flow spreads itself through the circle.

The difference between England and America

on the one hand, and the southern countries of Europe on the other, is founded in a good measure on the homes of the former, and the absence of them in the latter. The common law has acknowledged the principle, that every man's house is his castle. It is true in more senses than one. Home is the citadel of all the virtues of the people. For by home we mean something more than one's house: it is the family that makes the home. It is the peculiar abode and domain of the wife: and this one circumstance marks it out as human, and as Christian. Sacred wedlock is the fountain not only of its pleasures but of its moral excellence. The poorest wretch who has a virtuous, sensible, industrious, and affectionate wife, is a man of wealth. Home is the abode of our children. Here they meet us with their smiles and prattle. He who unfeignedly enjoys this cannot be altogether corrupt; and the more we can make men enjoy it, the further do we remove them out of harm's way. No men therefore are better members of society, or more apt to become stable and wealthy citizens, than such as are well married and well settled.

A learned foreigner of Spanish descent, of high distinction in the politics of his own country, was once leaving the doors of a pleasant family, in New England, where he had been spending an evening. He had observed the Sabbath calm of the little circle—its sequestered safety and inde-

pendence ; he had marked the freedom of affectionate intercourse between parents, and children, and friends, the cordial hospitality, and the reference of every thing abroad to this central spot of home. As he retired from the lovely scene, he exclaimed, with a sort of transport, “ Now I have the secret of your national virtue, and intelligence, and order ; it is in these domestic retreats ! ”

“ Domestic happiness, thou only bliss
Of Paradise that has survived the fall !
Though few now taste thee unimpair'd and pure,
Or, tasting, long enjoy thee ! too infirm
Or too incautious to preserve thy sweets
Unmix'd with drops of bitter, which neglect
Or temper sheds into thy crystal cup ;
Thou art the nurse of Virtue, in thine arms
She smiles, appearing, as in truth she is,
Heaven-born, and destined to the skies again ! ”*

* Cowper.

II.

THE WORKING-MAN'S DWELLING.

“When we mean to build,
We first survey the plat, then draw the model;
And when we see the figure of the house,
Then must we vote the cost of the erection.”

King Henry IV. part 2.

THERE is such a satisfaction in having a house of one's own, that most Americans begin to think of building as soon as they are rich enough. It is proverbial that this becomes a mania, even in the country, with men of wealth. In quantity, therefore, we have no lack; the defects are in the quality of our architecture. For want of observing the plain dictate of reason contained in my motto, many great houses are finished less splendidly than they were begun. As I seldom take a walk without seeing the dwelling of some mechanic going forward, I am anxious to make a few suggestions on this point.

A good site is almost every thing: in such a land as ours, few are compelled to build in bad situations. Yet half the houses we see in the country are disadvantageously placed. How little advantage is taken of native groves! I have in

my eye a very costly edifice, just near enough to a beautiful copse to tempt the belief that the proprietor wished to avoid its shades, while he is making a strenuous effort to bring forward some starveling trees in a miserable clay before his door! The general design is next in importance: this is what strikes the distant beholder. The eye is shocked when, in a clever building, the door has three windows on one side and five on the other. The proportions of length and height, the pitch of roof, the number, and size, and arrangement of lights, are all matters which demand careful study, in order to produce a good effect; but in most cases they are left to chance or whim. Symmetry is as cheap as disproportion, and rich men should not monopolize all neatness and taste. A good plan gives beauty to the plainest materials, while no expense can render a false proportion elegant. A well-designed cottage, of the humblest dimensions and simplest fabric, fills the eye, and gives repose to the mind. But finery cannot hide bad taste; it oftener betrays it. We may here apply Crabbe's couplet—

“Faults that in dusty pictures rest unknown,
Are in an instant through the varnish shown.”

Men who come suddenly to wealth are greatly in danger of falling into this trap. The showy in architecture is usually coupled with the vulgar; just as in dress the finest are not the truly well-

bred. Pope has satirized this abuse of ornament :

“Load some vain church with old theatric state
 Turn arcs of triumph to a garden gate ;
 Reverse your ornaments, and hang them all
 On some patch'd dog-hole eked with ends of wall

“Then clap four slices of pilaster on't,
 That laced with bits of rustic makes a front ;
 Shall call the winds through long arcades to roar,
 Proud to catch cold at a Venetian door.”

Some of our builders, I hope, will read these essays : their influence is of great moment. If well instructed, they will tell such as apply to them, that the word *Architecture* is not confined to the massy piles of public edifices, but that the very same principles which draught the Birmingham Town Hall, or the Madelaine, can descend to plan the cottage, or the rustic bridge. These principles ought to be studied, not only in our colleges, but our lyceums and other institutions for the instruction of working-men. Books of architectural plans should be compiled and abstracted from the more costly European publications. I am sure any one who is familiar with the *Tailor's Magazine*, will grant that there is no insuperable obstacle in the way of a builder's periodical. And not architects alone, but all planners and proprietors should familiarize their eye to the contemplation of good models.

The day it is to be hoped will come, when even the day-labourer will not think it necessary to be slovenly because he is poor, and when the most incessant drudges shall begin to see that there are some good things besides coin and bank-notes. The practical man whose views are enlarged will not fail to see that pleasures of imagination and taste have also their price. Decoration naturally comes after use; we build our houses before we deck them. But in the advancement of society, there is a stage at which men always set a value upon ornament; and though these circumstances may breed luxury, they have fruits which are desirable, such as increased contentment, placid joy, refined taste, cheerful reflection, and the love of home.

Along the bank of a half-finished canal I saw, the other day, a settlement, which, at a furlong's distance, showed the origin of its tenants. Extemporaneous huts, barrel chimneys, floors without boards, windows without glass, and a dunghill at the entrance; these afforded the symptoms of a *hovel*. Here was no decoration; and I argue concerning this settlement, that there are no intellectual pleasures, no taste, no gentleness, no fire-side happiness.

Let me change the scene. I knew a family of English people, no richer than those just noticed, who lived in a dwelling no larger than one of these—but how different! I see it yet in memory,

its whitened palings and beaten walk to the door, its tight sides and close roof, and especially its edge of summer flowers around a plot of the cleanest grass, and its roses and woodbine creeping over every window. They were poor, but they were tidy. More than this; they were fond of natural beauty, and fond of home, and therefore always aiming to make home lovely.

Every reader has many times seen the same thing, and some have already learned the connexion between simple decoration and domestic virtue and peace. Why does an English cottage strike an American with surprise? Why does he look, as at a strange thing, upon the French peasantry taking their evening repast beneath their trees and vines? Because we Americans are so particularly practical, and so possessed of the demon of trade, that nothing is valuable which cannot be sold. Value is becoming equivalent to vendibility. Valuable means saleable: worth means money. If a flower, or a hedge-row, or a cascade, or a bust, or a prospect, add to the price under the hammer, these things are valuable, and are straightway inserted in the lithographic view of the auctioneer. They are useful. Usefulness is that quality of things whereby they bring money.

III.

THE GARDEN AND GROUNDS.

“Tall thriving trees confess the fruitful mould,
 The reddening apple ripens here to gold;
 Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,
 With deeper red the full pomegranate glows, &c.

HOMER'S *Odyssey*, book vii.

It was certainly an exaggeration of Mrs. Trollope to say, that no one could ever hear two Americans talk five minutes without the word *dollar*. So Bonaparte exaggerated when he called the British “a nation of shopkeepers.” Be it so. Caricatures often tell the truth. Even the hideous concave mirror, though it exaggerate ever so much, shows me some grand blemishes of my face. I have tried the experiment, in walking the crowded streets of our cities, to catch the predominant word of the passers-by. The catalogue is limited, and consists of such as these, “Ten per cent.”—“doing a good business”—“money market”—“operations in property”—“exchange”—“stock”—“thousand dollars”—“credit”—“profits”—“fortune,” &c. &c.

If a man is so practical that he will not wash his face without “value received,” I entertain no

hopes of bringing him over. I have no *purchase* for my instrument. Now cleanliness is a sort of decoration; negative, perhaps, but the condition of all the rest. Neatness follows very closely: a cleanly child is usually neat. The cleanly housewife is sure to produce in her cottage a certain trim and symmetrical arrangement which gratifies the eye. This is neatness budding into beauty. This transition ought to be seized upon wherever it appears. The pleasant little children who are yonder playing in the dust may be taught to keep themselves clean, and then to be neat. This is the path towards decoration. Taste needs development. These creatures may be bred to enjoy ornament: and thus we may get a race of people, even among the poor, who will begin to beautify the land. I live in the hope of seeing cottages along our multiplied and dirty railways, each adorned not only with a white surface and a close fence, but with roses, pinks, tulips, and all the pretty vegetable gifts of a loving Providence; gifts which our yeomanry have too much banished to green-houses and ballads.

The ways of adorning a house by rural aids are various, and so well known as scarcely to need enumeration. They may be adapted to the lowliest habitation of civilized man, no less than to the villa or the chateau. Nothing but love for domestic beauty and ordinary tact are required to rear a thousand tasteful abodes along all our high-

ways. And if but one provident householder will begin, we shall find that, humble as his habitation may be, he will soon be imitated by his neighbours. Fashion itself, the cause of so many follies, may be brought in aid of virtuous enjoyment. Let some working-man make the trial, by holding up before his mind rural decoration as a distinct object. Let him secure to himself a house and garden where he is willing to spend his life. Let him, as his means allow, have it tight and finished, and by all means duly enclosed. This is the frame-work; after this ensue the details. Let him learn the economy of a little timely paint, and of a fence or hedge which will withstand the assaults of wind and beasts. From day to day, as he may be able to snatch a moment for breathing the fresh air, let him remove unsightly objects and make an entrance upon positive ornament. How easy it is to set out clumps or rows of trees, for shade and fruit, flowering shrubs or evergreen hedges! How agreeable to the wife and the little ones, to be called out to join in dropping the cheap flower-seed or training the luxuriant vine!

To men whose life is spent in labour, the subject is peculiarly interesting. The confinement of their daily toils creates the want of just such relaxation and refreshment as have been indicated. And let it be remembered that in our country even the poor man should cultivate his taste, because every poor man may look forward to the time when he shall be rich. Let him educate his

faculties, that his ignorance may not some day disgrace his wealth. It is common to sneer at the mechanic, and to consider the youth who becomes an apprentice as degraded. This is very short-sighted. I know no class of society whom success makes so truly independent, or who in the decline of life have so much leisure as mechanics. Compare them, in this respect, with professional men. The lawyer or the physician, however wealthy he may become, finds still increasing labours; the more riches, the more toil. Unless he relinquishes his business altogether, he must do the work himself. He cannot send his foreman to plead a cause, or to set a leg; nor can he, like the rich mechanic, sit in his parlour or his arbour, and know that all his great concerns are well conducted by proxy. Working-men should look to this, and from the time when they first enter a habitation of their own, should cultivate the delights of domestic ornament.

Among these ornaments, the highest rank is due to Gardening; including in that term the rearing of valuable trees. Children should be early taught that when they set out a fine tree, or insert a graft, they are doing a favour to posterity, and beginning that which shall continue to make others happy when they are in their graves. It has always been pleasant to me to see the house of the industrious citizen embowered in flowering vines and trees. And on Saturday evening, a season when so many forsake their work only

for the porter-house or the tavern, the man who possesses such a retreat will have a strong inducement to seek his delightful home, and meet his little household among the smiles of natural scenery.

There are many very precious maxims of life which need to be pointed out; they are overlooked by the mass of people. Once indicated, they are believed and embraced. Among these is the following: *Simple ornament hinders no good use.* The watch runs as well in a comely case, as it would in a deal box. The draught is just as savoury out of a chased tankard. And every good of household life is unimpaired by nestling among green foliage, climbing honeysuckles, and parterres of flowers. I long to see this acted upon by our people. I long to see them snatching a few hours from the noisy throng of idlers, and the delirious mirth of the bar-room, and spending them on the little innocent decorations of humble but delightful home.

The time required for beautifying a house and enclosure is really so little, that it scarcely admits of being brought into a calculation. A few minutes at daybreak, in the spring and autumn, will in the course of a year work wonders. A few snatches of time after labour is ended may be spared by the busiest man. If his work has lain within doors, or has been of the sedentary kind, a little exercise and air, enjoyed in pruning his hedge or trimming his vines, will be restorative to his health and

spirits. This is better than mere repose. Nature abhors a vacuum of employment. Is not this positive gain? Health is "the poor man's riches:" that which conduces to it is worth more than money. Even those who are athletic, or who work at trades which give them constant motion, do not the less need something of this sort. It is not mere muscular exertion which preserves and restores health. There may be great bodily effort with no better result than fatigue. What every man requires when the day is done, is gentle recreation, something between work and play, which shall break the train of moody thought, repair the waste of nervous elasticity, and put the jaded mind in good humour with itself and others.

When the artizan, after his evening repast, goes out to water his flowers, every thing he touches is his own; and nothing so much his own as the tree he planted or the shades he gathered. He is refreshed and tranquillized, and grows into the love of home. These pleasures are mightily increased, when he sees around him his little children partaking in his toils and joys, and cheering one another with the merry laugh to work or sport; while the wife's voice, heard within, as she sings contentedly over the cradle, adds a lovely music to the scene. This is a picture, of which the original may be found in many a poor but happy family; would that it were so in all! Un-

der such shades as these, domestic quiet loves to dwell ; and in such a spot religion finds its sanctuary.

Contrast with this a case which we are often called to witness. The mechanic or labourer has worked hard all day. At the close of his toils he turns his face homewards. But he has not provided or cherished at his dwelling any strong attraction. No refinement of taste has ever softened his spirit. It has been too much his practice to pass his leisure hours elsewhere. He feels the need of some relaxation. He is languid from fatigue, and sullen from the disgust of labour. In such a condition he is easily attracted to the bar-room. There, amidst the odours of liquor and tobacco, he forgets his previous listlessness and anxiety, to become the victim of an unnatural and dangerous excitement. The glass, the jest, and the song make the evening fly swiftly. Late at night he wends his way home, if not drunk, yet humbled, discontented, and peevish. No children greet him with their joyous laugh ; the neglected little creatures are asleep, and the sad wife is awake only through anxious expectation of her husband. Am I extravagant in tracing much of the misery in such a case to the want of taste for those little things which make one's home desirable ? As a general observation, I have never seen idle or profligate sons issuing from within the cottage paling which has been adorned by

their own infant hands. And, on the other hand, it would require a stoical love of virtue for its own sake, to make any youth love the foul, smoky, fenceless cabin of a thriftless father. Sweeten home, and you close nine out of ten doors to temptation.

IV.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

“Sufficiency, content,
 Retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books,
 Ease and alternate labour, useful life,
 Progressive virtue, and approving Heaven!
 These are the matchless joys of virtuous love.”

THOMSON.

It is well known to all readers of fiction, that the novel commonly ends, as soon as the happy pair are united at the altar; and it would be thought a singular romance in which the interest should be made to turn mainly upon the pleasures of married life. But whatever it may be in fiction, wedlock is the source of the richest happiness in real life. Its joys indeed are not of the sort which the novelist loves to dwell on; they are less like the lightning or the meteor than the sunset or the dawn. They are not the raptures of the lover, which are often founded in mere sense, and vanish when youth and beauty are gone; but the steady glow of a true love that outlasts every external charm, and holds on its constant light even amidst wrinkles and old age.

Trite as the subject is, I must be allowed to spend a little time upon it, as it is nearly connected

with the happiness of the working-man's home. What is life, especially to the artisan, without home? and what is home, without gentle woman, the friend, the wife, the mother? The English nobleman, and those who ape his manners, may trample on these domestic pleasures; but it is like treading down the lily of the valley, the cowslip, and the violet. Husband and wife, in high life, may affect great coldness, live apart, maintain separate equipages, and flaunt at different watering-places; they have debauched all taste for the joys of nature and of virtue: but husband and wife, in our happier sphere, are necessary to one another, and cannot be severed without loss and anguish.

In our favoured land there can scarcely be said to be any check to marriage. Our young people marry early, and are free from that sullen, brooding prudence which is inculcated by painful necessity on the peasantry of the old country. Matrimony is therefore more an affair of the heart; and this, in spite of all sneers at love-marriages, I shall ever hold to be a great advantage. What was said on this subject by Franklin, seventy years ago, is still true, that early marriages stand the best chance of happiness. The temper and habits are plastic and easily run together; the want of personal experience is supplied by that of elder friends who still survive. "Late children," says the Spanish proverb, "are early orphans." "With us in America," Dr. Franklin

wrote in 1768, "marriages are generally in the morning of life; our children are therefore educated and settled in the world by noon; and thus, our business being done, we have an afternoon and evening of cheerful leisure to ourselves. By these early marriages we are blessed with more children; * * * * * hence the swift progress of population among us, unparalleled in Europe."

Profane jesters and rakes have succeeded in getting afloat in society too many idle and wicked sayings about the state of matrimony. It is a truth at once of Scripture and observation, that "he that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord." I am so far from having any fears of infusing into my readers unduly romantic notions in regard to marriage, that I am convinced the households of our working-men would be invested with a new charm if the mutual regards of husband and wife could be hallowed with more of these tender, respectful, and sacred sentiments.

Poor Sedley! what I have just written brings him to my mind. Though what the world would call but a common man, he had a heart worthy of a knight-errant. He is now gone; but I am sure there is many a woman living who remembers the chaste but tender respect, almost passionate, if it had not been almost courtly, with which he regarded the sex. And as for Isabel his wife, though at the time I mean she was neither beautiful nor young, she seemed in Sedley's eyes to be the

representative of all the virtues. I never heard from them a fondling expression, or observed the slightest indication of that conjugal mellowness which is a sort of perpetuated honey-moon. But then respect and love breathed from every action.

Once I found him, when much enfeebled by disease, so much affected as to be in tears. "I am an unlucky fellow," said he, laying his hand on mine; "I have hurt the feelings of my best friend—of Isabel. No," said he, "I recall the phrase—it is often but another name for anger—and anger never rested in her gentle bosom. Grief—grief—that is the word: I have grieved her. By my sullenness and petulance, the fruit of my diseases, but yet unpardonable, I have grieved her. And I must go," he exclaimed, "and ask her forgiveness, for in fifteen years she has never given me a look of unkindness." It was with difficulty that I persuaded him to lay aside this purpose. He could scarcely believe that a needless explanation is always a source of real pain. When I afterwards found that Isabel gently smiled at his caprices, which she understood better than himself, I was only the more convinced that "a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, and that her price is above rubies."

Let the debauchee prate of the constraint of wedded love, and the zest he has in licentious pleasure; let the monkish casuist declaim against wedlock as a lower condition in point of morals: I will still repeat the verses of the matchless bard

—verses which I would that every young American had engraven on his memory :

“Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbecoming holiest place.
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
Present or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
Here love his constant shafts employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile
Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendear'd,
Casual fruition; nor in court amours,
Mix'd dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
Or serenate, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.”

V.

THE WIFE AT HOME.

“For nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote.”

MILTON.

It has been one of my most serious apprehensions, that in the multitude of our societies and public combinations, men and women might chance to forget that they have any thing to do individually. We have societies to take care of our health, and societies to take care of our kitchens. Almsgiving, so far as practised at all, is practised chiefly by wholesale. Perhaps we may see the day when we shall dine together like the Spartans, and when all cookery and education shall be done upon the large scale.

These thoughts were suggested to my mind with greater force than common, a few days since, upon my making a visit to the house of Mrs. Nelson, the wife of a reputable farmer, a few miles from our village. If I were to attempt a portrait of this excellent lady, I should fill a volume; I can only give an outline. Mrs. Nelson is, in the American as well as the English

sense, a fine woman. Temperance, early rising, industry, and, above all, serene cheerfulness of soul, have left on her cheek at forty those roses which fashion and excitement often blast before fifteen. But what I took my pen to notice was, that truly feminine and Christian trait of my good friend—she is a “keeper at home.”* Though I have been a church-going man many years, I do not remember to have heard any one of our clergy enlarge upon this Scripture phrase; and yet the older I grow, the more wisdom there seems to be in it. The best women in the world are those who stay at home; such is the opinion of the best judges, to wit, their husbands. The worst women are those who have no home, or who love all other places better; such is the verdict of those who meet them abroad. A wife at the hearth is as indispensable as a steersman at the wheel. There is scarcely any degree of prudence or firmness which will enable a man to have a well-ordered family unless his partner have some of the same qualities. Even the success of out-door business is more dependent upon this than is commonly supposed: agreeably to a vulgar proverb, “He that would thrive, must ask his wife.” In a house where children or apprentices are to be cared for, this is plainly true. A little procrastination, sloth, or want of thrift in the woman will suffice to make every thing go wrong. Who can

* Titus ii. 5.

count up the cases where poor fellows have been ruined by their wives ?

This is a hard saying, but if it were softened it would be less true. Surely it is no disrespect to the better sex to point out those rare exceptions, which, like the dim tarnish on the face of the moon, make the other tracts look all the brighter. After you shall have exaggerated to the utmost the number and the faults of idle, gadding, gossiping women, we shall still have a million of American housewives, brightening a million homes and hearts. Mrs. Nelson is one of them. Her husband is not the meekest man in the county, nor by nature the most hospitable, but she makes up for all, like the credit side of an account. In the exercise of the passive virtues, she finds her greatest happiness. She holds it to be one of the very first duties of life to render her home delightful, first to her husband, next to her children, and then to all who may enter her hospitable doors. Early in life, she observed that several of her husband's intimate acquaintances were becoming irregular in their habits; she talked it over with Nelson. He, being a rough man, declared it to be his intention to break off all connexion with Lang and Shepherd on the spot. "O, no, husband!" said she; "that would be cruel: remember the proverb, 'a soft word breaketh the bone.' Let me alone to bring them to their bearings; at any rate give me a month for an experiment." "You!" he exclaimed, in astonishment; "Mary,

you amaze me ; surely you will not follow them to the bar-room, as Jemima Murphy does her goodman ?” “ Perhaps not,” said his wife, laughing ; “ but we women have some secrets left still. Wait but a month.”

The month rolled round. It was with difficulty that Nelson kept himself from falling upon the two men violently, but he waited to see the issue, and even kept out of their way, that the incantation might not be interrupted. At the close of three weeks, Lang and Shepherd were two of the most quiet, orderly, and domestic men in the neighbourhood. “ Why, Mary,” said Nelson, “ what have you been doing to them ?” “ I ! husband ! I have not exchanged words with them for weeks.” “ Then you have had some witchcraft at work.” “ None in the world,” she replied ; “ the story is soon related. I had observed for a long time that their homes were growing dismal : and I often told Mrs. Lang what I feared concerning her husband. Indeed, I had heard you tell of Lang’s repeating over his glass that abominable saying, ‘ the devil’s at home.’ After my talk with you I set to work, not on the husbands, but their wives. Simple creatures ! they scarcely knew what I meant. They wished indeed that the men would spend more time at home, and even wept about their late hours and beer-drinking. But they were not prepared for my telling them that they must redouble the attractions of their own fireside—make the cheer better

—the fire brighter—the children cleaner—the house tidier—the welcome heartier; call in a pleasant neighbour to tea, or a friend's daughter to sing an innocent song, and even invite to a comfortable supper two or three of their husband's cronies. Before long they began to have pleasant evenings; and by a choice of company, a little good fruit, lemonade, home-made cake, and music, fairly convinced the two men that they could go pleasantly to bed without ale, porter, or brandied wine. 'The thing has taken admirably, and you see the result.'

Now though it is likely Nelson did not just then suspect it, this was the very course which had proved successful in saving himself from ruinous habits. And most earnestly is it to be wished that all our towns and villages were filled with such wives as honour and love the family institution! Every one has made the observation that there are many more women who are religious, than men; but the final cause of this has not so often been remarked. Divine Providence, by this discriminating favour to the one sex, pours influence into the social fountain. As are the mothers of a nation, so will be the sons, and, in a measure, the husbands. But to exercise full influence, the wife must be a keeper at home. She will find enough to employ her longest days, in the endless circle of household cares. While she will welcome the evening visiter, and often enlarge her frugal board for the bevy of friends, or even join in the social

party or the cheerful sleigh-ride, these things will be the exceptions, not the rule. So living, she will give happiness to the increasing circle. "Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also and he praiseth her."

VI.

THE WORKING-MAN'S DAUGHTER.

“How bless'd the maid whose heart, yet free
 From love's uneasy sovereignty,
 Beats with a fancy running high,
 Her simple cares to magnify :
 Whom labour, never urged to toil,
 Hath cherish'd on a healthful soil.”

WORDSWORTH.

WHEN I look around me among my fair countrywomen, and see them equal in grace and loveliness to any upon earth ; and when I observe how many of the most beautiful are come out from the dwellings of industry, I am filled with a glow of satisfaction which I would not repress and cannot put into words. But personal charms are the least of the graces of American women. It is, I hope, no part of our national conceit to think that the world cannot show more virtuous women. Perhaps the poison of the town is, in some degree, creeping into the country ; but still, in rural neighbourhoods, the virgin purity of the sex bears comparison with the choice of the whole earth.

There are few things of which men are more proud than of their daughters. The young father

follows the sportive girl with his eye, as he cherishes an emotion of complacency not so tender but quite as active as the mother's. The aged father leans on his daughter as the crutch of his declining years. An old proverb says that the son is son till he is married, but the daughter is daughter forever. This is something like the truth. Though the daughter leaves the parental hearth, she is still followed by kindly regards. The gray-haired father drops in every day to greet the beloved face; and when he pats the cheeks of the little grandchildren, it is chiefly because the bond which unites him to them passes through the heart of his darling Mary; she is his daughter still.

You have, my reader, a daughter—your hope, your pride. It is a blessing for which you may well thank Heaven: it is a trust at which you may well tremble. Beware how you neglect or mismanage so delicate a plant. Slight storms will blast a texture so susceptible. While your eye is upon your cherished girl, and the gush of affection is strongest and warmest, open your mind to the importance of being a wise father. What has this frail but inestimable creature to ask at your hands?

She should be guarded. It is superfluous to say that our daughters walk among dangers. Even at school, nay, in the bosom of our family, they require cautious attention. "A child left to himself," says Solomon, "bringeth his mother to

shame:" it is doubly true of the daughter. This is not one of the things which may be abandoned to self-management. Principles must be implanted, and heavenly precepts inculcated. The rich soil, when left untilled, brings forth a horrid crop of rank weeds. I would gladly avoid saying it, but even female companions may be snares, and it is not impossible for gay and fascinating girls to be bad associates. It has happened again and again that maidens have fallen when they merely "went out to see the daughters of the land." Far be it from me to commend the old Spanish plan of seclusion: I have no such wish. Let the gay creatures move freely in the circle of friends, but still let the parental eye and the parental hand be ever ready to descry and avert the danger. The great point is gained when the father is convinced that the daughter needs his care. He is less anxious, and she is safe.

She should be educated. The age is favourable to this. In heathen countries women have always been uneducated drudges. Among the most refined of the ancients, an educated woman was a sort of black swan, an object of curiosity and amazement. Among our own Christian ancestors, female education was made to consist almost entirely in housewifery, and a few offices of religion. But in this country, at present, the stream of opinion is wholly in favour of giving learning and accomplishment to the sex. As a general observation, it is true that daughters all

over the country have a better training than that of their mothers. Perhaps there is some danger of going to the extreme of refinement, and undertaking to give grace, and polish, and embellishment beyond what the solid acquisition will bear.

Give your daughter the best education you can afford: you can give her nothing better. And when I say the best education, I mean of course that which is most suited to her expectations in life, including in the term, not merely book-learning, but the household arts and the culture of the heart. There is tendency enough towards mere accomplishments, such as music, drawing, fancy-work, and the like; so that I plead more earnestly for the solids. And with respect to the latter, it is certainly safer to err on the side of too much, than on that of too little. Any little excess of attainment will be easily forgotten and thrown off amidst the cares of a family. The wife and mother has far less time than the husband to make attainments in after life; she must therefore get as much as is possible before marriage. In most of the schools with which I am acquainted, girls have too many branches offered to their attention. A girl's education is usually considered as complete after a course of three or four years; yet in this brief period she is expected in some seminaries to acquire the same amount of learning which it takes boys three times as long to acquire; and this over and above a list of minor ornamental branches of which the value is commonly in the

inverse proportion of the cost. This has weighed heavily upon my mind for some years past ; when I have seen the daughters of men who are frugal and practical in other matters, really cheated out of a good education by the quackery of a false system. The point of this rebuke is directed not so much against particular teachers, who will and must furnish what the public taste demands, as against those parents who are so foolish as to bring up their children on a diet of froth, flowers, and syllabub. No discreet parent surely will allow himself to look upon his daughter's education as a mere bait for suitors : he who does so is decking a victim for sacrifice. On the contrary, unless you can secure to your child a longer course of instruction than the average term, you will do well to limit her to a moderate number of branches, and these the most valuable, and to see that in these she is as thoroughly instructed as a boy would be in the same. Moreover, you will not allow yourself to be satisfied with the advertisements, circulars, or other professions of great schools, however fashionable, as to the choice of studies for your daughter, but will, after the best advice, select such a course as will promise discipline to her mind, and usefulness throughout life.

There is one more suggestion concerning this important subject, and then I leave your daughter to your own care : *She should be well married.* True enough ! you will exclaim ; but how is this

to be accomplished? I will tell you: not by manoeuvring, or match-making, or any mercenary or trade compact, such as, according to a hackneyed pun, may make "matrimony a matter of money;" not by any measure to procure this or that man as a son-in-law. Your cares are to have another direction. Make your daughter all that it is in your power to make her, by education in its widest sense, and be assured she will never lack suitors. The great difficulty will be to prevent her being snatched away from you by some unworthy man. How shall this be prevented? Not, as I think, by laying a repressing hand of cold iron upon affections already formed. No! no! It is almost always too late when matters have reached this point. But a wise line of conduct will be preventive of a wrong alliance in two particulars. For, first, if you bring the girl up in right principles, with knowledge, modesty, and affectionate duty, she will be in little danger of suffering any passion to gain strength against the wishes of a parent. And, again, if a suitable guard be placed over her associations, she will be seldom in those companies where such alliances are most apt to be formed, and will thus be kept out of harm's way.

O mothers, mothers! how greatly are ye concerned in this matter! While you encourage these young creatures in superficial accomplishments, and bold display, you are often preparing

for them a lifetime of chagrin and misery. On the other hand, where you train them at your side, by precept and example, in retiring, industrious, studious, virtuous habits, you are preparing them to be "corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

VII.

THE SCHOOLMASTER.

“Much zeal in virtue’s cause all teachers boast,
Though motives of mere lucre sway the most.”

COWPER.

It is pleasing to observe, as education spreads its influence more and more widely, that the instructors of our children are rising in public estimation. It has not been many years since the very name of schoolmaster was a temptation to a sneer. Perhaps the fault was sometimes in the pedagogues themselves: they were not always learned, they were not always discreet. It was not indeed more common then, than now, for young men raw from college to teach for a year or two, until they might become clergymen, lawyers, or doctors; but while they did so they were not held in great veneration; and the older sort, who made it a business for life, were often bachelors, humorists, and pedants. In the very State in which I am writing, there is a township, in which a majority of the schoolmasters were drunkards; and that since the Revolution. Poor fellows! I might wonder how they continued to buy their drink, out of the pittance which they received for

teaching, if I did not reflect that a man may kill himself with whisky for two shillings. They used to go about from house to house, like country tailors; and were less regarded. In the hard winters, many of them travelled on foot more miles in a month than they received dollars in a year. The school-houses were wretched dens, with no earthly recommendation but their airiness in the summer; and in these boys and girls, as full of mischief and prank as buxom health could make them, would vex the red-wigged master till his carbuncled nose emulated the red cloaks behind the door. Then came the smothered laugh, the furious reconnoitre of the offending bench, the cuff, the slap, the rejoinder, the surrejoinder; the quip modest, the reply churlish, the reproof valiant, the countercheck quarrelsome; till down fell the birchen shower. A stranger might have taken the engagement for a fight, as the whole commonly issued in a mutual castigation, in which the master was reduced to a good humour, and making a virtue of necessity, passed it all off as a joke.

In those days, however, of Cocker and Dilworth, there were some ripe scholars, even in the glens of the mountains; and if learning was hardly come by, it was prized the more. Old men are living, who remember to have heard Latin talked in the upper forms of log school-houses; nay, who have seen and heard the master, in a fine frenzy, spout Cicero, and even Demosthenes, in the ori

ginal. There were some who had emigrated from "the old country," and some were bred among ourselves, who taught for the love of it, and who would scarcely have been willing to exchange the ferula for the truncheon of a commander.

Many young people are now-a-days receiving a finished education, whose fathers scarcely knew a letter in a book. A few months ago, in a somewhat secluded place, almost five hundred miles from here, I found the state of affairs so changed from what it once was, that the daughters of mechanics were learning French, Latin, and the guitar. Whether this is wise or not may be reserved for future discussion; but one thing is certain, working-men are setting a higher value than formerly on education. If we may judge of the demand for an article by the price, teaching is a better business than it was. People are beginning to find out, that the man who gives good learning to their sons and daughters is doing them a favour. The schoolmaster is lifting his head, and is no longer ashamed of the title. It is right that this feeling should prevail, especially in the case of those who make teaching a business for life. Such men, if faithful and competent, are second to none in the good they do. The permanent teacher, especially when venerable for his years, ought to be honoured in every circle. While he looks benignantly round him on those whose fathers he has in former days led along the ways of knowledge, he should be made to

feel that his services are not undervalued. When this shall be more generally the case, there will be fewer instances of retreat from the vocation. The instructor of youth will be regarded as constituting one of the learned professions; and young men will look forward to this calling, just as they do to the pulpit or the bar. "If it were asked," says a late English writer, "what class of men would receive, in the present or next generation, the rewards to which their labours, when rightly understood and assiduously performed, justly entitle them, it might be answered, with every appearance of probability—those who improve the moral and intellectual characters of individuals, and fit them to perform the various duties of life with satisfaction to themselves and advantage to others."

A difficulty suggests itself in the case of many mechanics and other men of the industrious classes, which merits special attention. We have among us highly respectable persons of this description, who have never received a thorough education. Still they are improved by their own exertions, and by intercourse with society, and are consequently far above the contemptible prejudice with which ignorant parents regard all science and literature. So far are they from this, that they lament their own deficiencies, and hold nothing more resolutely before their minds than the purpose to have their children instructed. But in seeing this accomplished, there is this hinderance: they can-

not themselves pretend to decide who is and who is not a fit teacher ; and in this age, when recommendations for pills, or dictionaries, or professors, are as easily obtained as bank-accommodation, no parent can rely on mere general testimonials. Habits of calculation naturally lead a man in such a case to make the price a criterion : and here is a common snare. Wo to the boy or girl whose parent has been beguiled by a schoolmaster with no great merit but his cheapness. Cheapen your watch or your chaise, but not your child's instruction. I knew a teacher once—I know him still—whose like I would gladly see in every town and hamlet of my country. Though aiming to be no more than a common schoolmaster, he might have graced the chair of a university. His manners are formal, and his language precise, and his decisions positive : these things are wont so to be, in one that has ruled for fifty years. Yet he is bland, and ready to communicate. He will put on his huge round spectacles even now, to rule a girl's copy-book. His gray hairs sometimes blow about in the wind, while he is fixing a dial in a pupil's garden. He has been a great aid to surveyors and almanac-makers, and is suspected of helping the clergyman to scraps of Greek and Hebrew. For though he teaches English, he is not strange in the ancient lore ; and I am not sure that among all my good old mates, there is a single one who could better give the meaning of a hard quotation, than Robert Appletree.

VIII.

THE SCHOOLMASTER.

Continued.

“The village all declared how much he knew ;
’Twas certain he could write and cipher too ;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge :
In arguing, too, the parson own’d his skill,
For even though vanquish’d he could argue still.”

GOLDSMITH.

WE are apt to flatter one another that the world is growing wiser and better every day; and if great public improvements are to be taken as a fair sign, we are doubtless a greater people than our forefathers. They, poor souls, had neither steamships nor railways; the division of labour, which with us leads to such perfection in all the arts, had with them gone but a few steps. Books were rare among them; exceedingly rare among the earlier American settlers; so that the libraries of many able and learned men, before the Revolution, were smaller than collections which may now be found among mechanics. Schools are more numerous, and nearer together, and scarcely a day passes but we hear of discoveries in education, which are almost as numerous as patent

medicines. Surely the age must be getting wiser. Laying together a number of signs, such as the magnetic pills, animal magnetism, phrenology, the prolongation of life by vegetable diet, the astonishing modes of teaching penmanship in six lessons, and French in twenty, and the ponderous volumes of speeches delivered at school conventions and the like, is it not fair to expect the day when the royal road to science, like the north-west passage, shall have been discovered, and when a complete organization of that thinking pulp which we call the brain, shall be produced by steam?

Such meditations as these are not uncommon, but they are often driven clean out of my mind when I hear uncle Benjamin discourse about the times when he was a boy. Perhaps it was because he had just been insulted in the street, by a couple of scape-graces, who, with the insubordinate spirit which marks our day, had scoffed at his lameness, that the old man appeared somewhat ruffled during our last interview. He had seated himself by an old-fashioned Franklin stove, for he cannot endure coal, and with his feet upon the fender, was enjoying the soothing odours of his pipe. The very sight of him brought before my mind's eye the period before the Revolution. Here was the remnant of a robust frame and a vigorous understanding. Here was one remaining link to bind us to the old colonial times. Like many of the aged, he loves to discourse; and who has a better right?

“Ah,” said he, archly shaking a shrivelled finger at his grandsons, “if you had been schooled in *my* day, you would have had other jobs for your winter evenings than playing that idle game of backgammon which I see you at.” “How so, grandfather?” said Joseph, as he emptied his box and cried “*cinq-ace.*” — “I’ll tell you, boys. Learning was something to be scrambled for in those days. The schoolmaster was second only to the minister, and used to wear his hair in a bag. He went the rounds among the farmer’s houses, in a large circuit, and some of the boys used to trudge their four and five miles to school. As it was not every young collegian who could set up a school, the business of teaching was worth something. We did not, it is true, pay a great deal in hard money, but taking into the account firewood, clothing, board, and produce, we used to make the schoolmaster quite comfortable.”

“I suppose, grandfather, they used to whip, in those days?” — “You may well say so, Joseph; you may well say so. The teacher was not ashamed to be named *Master*, and we were not ashamed to call him so. Master he was, and it took a sturdy fellow to handle a set of resolute young cubs, who sometimes turned upon him and shut him out of his castle. Hard blows used to fall thick; and they made men of us. If you want to become a young Lord Betty, or, as the Indians say, ‘turn squaw,’ enter yourself at one

of these schools where the discipline is so parental, that the lads are made to believe a buffet or a box on the ear would ruin them. No, no! We had our full share of correction; and though we used to vow that we would take ample reprisals when we should get big enough, yet we never fulfilled the obligation. But every thing is on a new plan. I do not see anybody that can write a fair, round, copy-hand, such as we used to practise, having our knuckles well rapped if there was a single pot-hook awry. 'The teachers can't do it themselves, and they therefore cry 'sour-grapes,' and set copies in three-cornered letters like a girl's verses in a Valentine. The good old ciphering-books have gone out: they used to teach us figures, penmanship, and book-keeping, all at once. Then you seem to me to have some new-fangled school-book every month, and a new teacher almost every quarter. The cry is for cheap education—low-priced teachers; and your children fare accordingly. You have more wit than to do so with other things. You do not look out so carefully for the lowest-priced horse or bullock."

Thus the old man ran on. With due allowance for the predilections of age, there was enough of truth and reason in his complaints to make me pause and consider. The stream of knowledge is daily more diffused: I wish I were as sure that it is deeper. Often, in talking with old men, I am impressed with this truth, that while they know less about many things than we of the pre-

sent race, they know better what they had learned. If there was less compass in their knowledge, there was more weight. Confinement to a few books made them perfect in those few. You could not puzzle uncle Benjamin in the Spectator, or the Freeholder, or the poems of Pope; but he never heard of Shelley, or Bulwer, or Willis, and my friend Appletree tells me it is much the same in the learned languages. He contends, through thick and thin, that we have no scholars to match the old-school fellows of silver-buckles and hair-powder, and that since small-clothes went out, there has not been a teacher who could parse his boys in Latin. He even doubts whether our professors of language could all of them make a good off-hand Latin speech; and as to Latin verses, which used to be so common, they are as obsolete as horn-books and thumb-papers. He further avers, though I would not be held responsible for the assertion, that the men of '76 wrote purer, stronger, racier English than the men of this day; and that John Hancock, John Adams, Josiah Quincy, and George Washington, handled an easier, simpler, and manlier style, than Mr. Wise, Mr. John Quincy Adams, or Mr. Van Buren. But this, I dare say, was told me in confidence.

IX.

THE LASTING IMPRESSION OF EARLY READING.

“But she, who set on fire his infant heart,
And all his dreams and all his wanderings shared,
And bless'd, the Muse and her celestial art,
Still claim th' enthusiast's fond and first regard.”

BEATTIE.

IN the family of a working-man, where books cannot in all cases be very numerous, it is particularly desirable that those which fall in the way of the young people should be of the right sort; and this is to be managed not so much by rules and restrictions, as by a care in the filling of the shelves. If the latter have seductive books, they will be sought after by the children, even though you should open before their eyes the most sacred homilies, or preach yourself hoarse in decrying naughty novels and song-books. This becomes more important, when we call to mind that the whole course of a man's reading is often determined by the books which he happens to enjoy in his boyhood. Robinson Crusoe has made many a sailor; Spenser's Faery Queen made Pope a versifier; Xenophon's Memorabilia made Franklin a disputant; and if I might be allowed to play

the egotist in a harmless way, I would add that the liking of which I am conscious for the old-fashioned English literature is owing to the contents of a single shelf in the house in which I spent my boyhood. That shelf contained the essays commonly known as the British Classics. I perfectly remember the eagerness with which I used to clamber up the edge of the book-cases, to reach these tempting works. At first my object was to look at the pictures, of which there were two or three in each of the thirty-nine volumes. But soon I was allured to do more; and while yet quite a little boy, was as familiar with the more light and humorous parts of Addison, Steele, Goldsmith, and Mackenzie, as I have since been with any other productions. And though books for children were fewer then than they are now, I am satisfied that the daily converse of a child with such works as the Spectator, the Guardian, and the Connoisseur, even if he finds many things above his apprehension, is more profitable and far more delightful than the perpetual dawdling over penny-volumes; written on the plan of making every thing level to the meanest capacity. These first tastes of good letters diffuse their savour through a lifetime. Hence it must be clear to every parent, that he cannot be too careful in the choice of books; meaning not merely such as are given to his children as their own, but such also as form a part of the family stock.

When I try to gather up the broken recollec-

tions of early days, and ask what pieces of reading have left the most abiding impressions upon my mind, I discern at once that it has been that class which met my attention casually: not my school-books, not the works spread before me by my sage advisers, but effusions, gay or grave, which I hastily devoured by forbidden snatches. At an early age I fell upon the Life of Benjamin Franklin, as written by himself: a book which I shall always cite as an illustration of one of my favourite maxims, that truth is more interesting than fiction. The essays appended to the volume engaged my attention; and I was not content to read merely what I could understand, but dived boldly into some of the profundities of his politics and his philosophy. The Way to Wealth, Poor Richard, and The Whistle, are perhaps as familiar to the minds of the American people, as any human productions: I may therefore cite them as remarkable instances of lasting impression. I wish my admiration of Benjamin Franklin were not mingled with anxiety as to the probable influence which one or two of these pieces, and the general tone of his economical writings, have had upon the national way of thinking. The maxims of Poor Richard are undeniable; and if the great end of man were to make money, they might be adopted as a sort of pecuniary gospel. But I fear that the boy who is bred upon such diet as—"If you would be wealthy, think of saving as well as getting;" or "Six pounds a year is but a groat a

day;" or "He that murders a crown destroys all it might have produced;" or "A penny saved is twopence clear"—or any the like adages, will be not merely rich, but miserly. I am so little of a utilitarian, that I do not believe wealth to be the chief good, or frugality the cardinal virtue; and most heartily do I regret that such an authority as Franklin should have erected for us such a tutelary saint as Poor Richard.

Be this, however, as it may, my position holds true; the whole colour of our life, both mental and moral, is frequently taken from what we read during childhood; and I am here reminded that this very philosopher is an instance in point. A very little book, exceedingly prized in old-time families, seems to have had great effects on his mind. In a letter written from France, in 1784, Franklin thus addresses Dr. Mather of Boston: "When I was a boy, I met with a book, entitled, *Essays to do good*, which I think was written by your father. It had been so little regarded by a former possessor, that several leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for *I have always set a greater value on the character of a doer of good, than on any other kind of reputation*; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book."* These are notable words. Let them have their

* From the American Museum, vol. vii. p. 100

due weight with the young. They were uttered by Dr. Franklin when he was in his seventy-ninth year: they were therefore not the fruit of sudden excitement. Their import is, that if he had been useful, it was owing to a torn book read in his boyhood. I hope the republication of this remark will not only have the effect of leading every one who reads it to procure this work of the famous Cotton Mather, but will induce some publisher to give it to us in a shape more elegant and better suited to the reigning taste, than that in which it has hitherto appeared. "Such writings," says Franklin, of a similar production, "though they may be lightly passed over by many readers, yet if they make a deep impression on one active mind in a hundred, the effects may be considerable."

When the artisan, or the farmer, or the tradesman is making up a collection of books, he ought to bear in mind that a well-kept book will last a lifetime. Some of the soundest books I have were owned by my grandfather. It is great improvidence to fill our houses with trash. Ten dollars, wisely expended, will, at an auction or book-shop, furnish you with fine old copies, in sheep or even calf, of Milton, Young, Thomson, Pope, the Spectator, the Rambler, Boswell's Johnson, Plutarch's Lives, Josephus, with quite a sprinkling of later and lighter productions. And this will be a source of endless entertainment during the winter evenings.*

* See the American Mechanic, p. 267.

X.

READING FOR BEGINNERS.

“Only, good master, while we do admire
Thy virtue, and thy moral discipline,
Let's be no Stoics, nor no stocks, I pray.”
Taming of the Shrew.

RULES are good things, but one may have too much of them; and overmuch legislation is a snare and a burden. Some of my friends, knowing me to be a bookish man, acquainted with a number of the old English authors, have again and again begged me to lay down for them, in black and white, a course of reading, which they might use themselves, and give to their young folks. This I have always resisted, partly because I have a dread of running all minds through the same flattening-mill, and partly, perhaps, because whatever little attainments I have myself made, have come to me, not by regulations, but in spite of them. I am half-disposed to think this is nature's own way. Men and families that have been held down to as rigid a uniformity as a British garrison, whose regimental order is absolute, even to gaiter, moustache, and pipe-clay, always have, in my eye, a cramp look. They have

grown like fruit trees nailed to a garden wall, or box-wood in the old-fashioned tin moulds. Even in the fine arts, the pupil may be kept too long in the dull formalities of the drawing-school. The port-crayon need not be always in hand. As I was lately in a very interesting conversation, in a railroad car, with an eminent artist of Philadelphia, he related to me a pointed saying of our great Gilbert Stuart, dropped by the latter when he was painting in London; "If young men are ever to learn," said he, "it must be spontaneously. You must teach them to draw, as young puppies are taught to swim; chuck them in, and let them take their chance." It is somewhat so in letters; at least it has been so with the most successful. Pray, what list of authors had Franklin, Murray, or Gifford?

When I remember my boyhood, I am rapt into a little fairy-land. O how full of rules were my compulsory pursuits! O how free as air my reading! The dear old books in which I used to pore, without direction, nay, against direction—how do they rise before my memory, like ghosts of beloved friends! Their very looks are before me; I see their very "form and pressure." Nay, smile not, reader, the odours of ancient volumes, perused by me long, long ago, are in my mind's nostril this blessed night. There is Sanford and Merton—the very first "big book" I can call to mind; it was given to me by my father; I did not so much read it, as gloat over it. To this day

I cannot explain the charms of that volume ; but who ever read it uncharmed ? “ Robinson Crusoe ! ” I need not tell an experience which is that of all the world. “ The Thousand and One Nights ”—It was somewhat a stolen enjoyment ; but not less precious for that ; and it opened an orient world, into which, on the mere strength of boyish fancies recollected and embalmed, it would have taken little at certain times to transport me bodily, as those incomparable fictions did in spirit. “ The Pilgrim’s Progress ”—There were two things about this immortal story which made it dearer to me than all the rest ; first, it carried with it a pleasing yet fearful shuddering as before high religious mystery ; and, secondly, it was a prolonged enigma, and he is no child who loves not a riddle. In later days, the same work has commended itself to my riper judgment, by its solid sense, its holy unction, its lordly imaginings, its epic conduct, and its “ English pure and undefiled ”—my mother tongue—the dialect, not of the college or of books, but of the market, the shop, and the hall. I hope earnestly, that while they are hammering out for us a new language, to be called American-English, and new-vamping the orthography of all the old writers in order that the books printed on the two sides of the water may be as unlike as possible—I hope they will leave a little of the racy idiomatic speech of the old country still incorrupt, in such books as the Pilgrim’s Progress.

Set a boy to read a large book through, for a task, and you kill the book's influence on him. But spread works before him, and let a little childish caprice govern his choice, and he will learn rapidly. It is not instruction merely that the young scholar wants; here is a great mistake; no, it is excitement. Excitement is that which drives his soul on, as really as steam does the engine. But then you must keep him on the track. And the same thing holds in self-culture. Somebody has said that every well-educated man is self-educated; and he said not amiss. Even in universities the mind is its own great cultivator. Do for yourself, young reader, so far as you know how, what there is perhaps no kind friend or teacher to do for you. It may be, while you read this page, in your shop or garret, or by the dull light beside some greasy counter, that you would gladly have a lift above your present low pursuits, into the world of knowledge. O that I were near you, to give you such aid as I have; but in lieu of this take a friend's advice. My good fellow, write down that wish. I say, write it down. Go now and take a fair piece of paper, record your determination to get knowledge. My word for it—all experience for it—you will not be disappointed. There are, probably, not many books at your command, but no matter. Many wealthy young men, amidst thousands of volumes, pine away in listless ignorance. Sometimes we read with a double zest such things as we have to

enjoy by stealth—after hours of work, or before day. What is thus read sticks fast.

The deep impressions made by one's first reading are so delightful, that we are glad to renew them. It is like a first love. When the Bible opens before me at the story of Joseph, or the Prodigal Son, I am all at once arrested—my thoughts go back to childhood—a thousand persecutions since have not dispossessed the first imaginations. They throng before my mental vision all the images of that dreamy time—all the tender cares—all the little innocent misapprehensions. What an unbought pleasure is here! Give me therefore my small shelf of books, in order that each one may be the centre of such remembrances. Let others throng the circulating libraries, and take the mingled alcohol and opium of the lecherous and envious Byron, the puling and blasphemous Shelley, the seducing Bulwer; give me my Bible, my Milton, my Cowper, my Bunyan, my shelf of histories, my shelf of biography, and my shelf of travels, and I will have more "thick coming fancies" in an hour than they in a day.

I wish you could be persuaded to let your young people run a little out of harness. A horse always in shafts learns to stumble. You would not send your boy or your girl into the orchard to eat apples and pears by a list of particulars; no, give them the key, and let them pick and choose.

XI.

READING FOR ENTERTAINMENT.

“Our kind relief against a rainy day,
We take our book, and laugh our spleen away.”

DRYDEN.

THE man whose days are spent in labour does not need so great a proportion of light reading, as the professional man or the student. Nor need this paradox startle any one. As it is true that the lawyer or the bank-clerk does not need, when evening comes, to rest his limbs, for the very plain reason, that he has not been exerting them, and that they are not weary; so it is equally true, that the wheelwright or the turner does not need to relax his reasoning powers, because he has not been putting them to task. The jaded body of the workman claims its repose, the jaded mind of the scholar claims its repose; but the tired labourer may rest his limbs while he studies mathematics, just as the exhausted student may refresh his spirit while he saws wood.

I have long thought that ignorance or oversight of this truth, has been a great stumblingblock in the way of the improvement of the industrious classes. The flood of cheap novels and other

literary syllabubs is so exuberant, that, like the Nile in an overflow, it comes up to every man's door. Those who least need relaxation of mind, because they have been engaged in no mental effort, are the principal patrons of this sort of literature. I have no doubt that most of the romances of our circulating libraries are worn out in the hands of working-men and women. If their taste had not been perverted, they would be quite as much entertained with a book of science, or an instructive history, as by the frivolous story; but forgetting this, or having never known it, they go on year after year, until their minds lose all vigour, just as completely as their stomachs would have lost tone, if for a like period they had been fed upon nothing but pastries, ices, and confections.

The demand for this merely entertaining literature is evinced by the character of the large weekly newspapers, and low-priced magazines, which circulate most among operatives. I need not name these; our cities abound in them. The newspapers to which I allude are commonly issued on Saturday, and their immense sheet gives occupation to many a poor reader for the whole of Sunday. Now you will observe, that a large part of the outer form of these publications is frequently taken up with just that kind of reading which is fitted to make a sound mind sick, and a feeble mind crazy. Tales upon tales of love, of horror, of madness, and these often the effusions

of the most unpractised and contemptible scribblers, who rejoice in this channel for venting their inanities, succeed one another week after week, and are the chief reading of persons whom I could name, for year after year. If a man is bent upon novel-reading, in the name of common reason, let him go to what is worth reading—let him sate his mind with Scott, and Edgeworth, and Ferriar, and Ward; but let him not expose so delicate a thing as an undisciplined mind to the everlasting wash and ooze of such slops as these.

By such a course of reading the mind gets a surfeit: the appetite sickens, and so dies. Let this become general, let it become the taste of the country, and it will be here as it is in France. The palled interest must be awakened by more pungent condiments; and as old snuff-takers sometimes mingle cayenne in their pinch, the jaded novel readers will have recourse to the double-distilled horror and obscenity of the Parisian romance. Symptoms of this condition of things are already apparent, and it is this which makes me the more earnest in directing my young readers to a better and safer kind of entertainment.

“ Habits of close attention, thinking heads,
 Become more rare as dissipation spreads,
 Till authors hear at length one general cry—
 Tickle and entertain us, or we die.
 The loud demand, from year to year the same,
 Beggars invention, and makes fancy lame;

Till farce itself, most mournfully jejune,
Calls for the kind assistance of a tune;
And novels (witness every month's review)
Belie their name, and offer nothing new."*

Some years ago, it was frequently necessary for me to make journeys of some hundreds of miles in length. In taverns, and especially in steamboats, I found myself constantly in need of some reading which should be a relief from the prevalent listlessness. Like everybody else, I supplied myself with what is called light reading, namely, the latest tales, romances, annuals, magazines, and verses; and, like everybody else, I found myself perpetually laying down the volume in a paroxysm of insufferable ennui. Why thus? I could not but ask. Such reading has often relieved me after a day of hard study. Upon consideration, I was led to believe, that a diet of this kind is no more fit for a mind in active health, than water-gruel for a man-of-war's-man. If you set out with the purpose of being amused for several days together, the project will certainly fall through. When the edge is on the intellect unabated, it cannot be safely used upon such small matters. I was induced therefore on one occasion, as a desperate experiment, to take with me on a long journey a book on a philosophical subject in which I was interested, and which, I was sure, would task my powers to the utmost; and whether I am credited or not, I must declare the

* Cowper.

truth, I never found such a resource against the listlessness and weariness of a voyage, as in that difficult volume. Long after my own discovery, I met with the advice of Johnson: "If you are to have but one book with you on a journey, let it be a book of science. When you have read through a book of entertainment, you know it, and it can do no more for you; but a book of science is inexhaustible." The practical use I make of such truths is this: I would have all men who spend their principal hours in labour, to seek their mental relaxation in books of a higher order than those which promise mere amusement. At any rate, begin with the more solid, and make the trifling ones a last resort.

Not that I would by any means debar the young reader from works of gayety and humour; still less would I lock out pleasing narratives, whether histories or voyages and travels. These last afford perhaps the most healthful relaxation of which a wearied mind is capable. But let some useful knowledge always be the object of pursuit. Even if you seek the merest entertainment, you will find this the true policy. The nobler the game, the greater the enthusiasm of the hunter; although every shot be the same, yet the sportsman will not waste powder upon wrens. Make therefore a fair experiment of the quality and amount of pleasure which may be derived from such reading as the following: First, *Important History*; as that of Greece and Rome, of England and America.

Secondly, *Biography*; beginning with old Plutarch, the favourite of every age, and including the memoirs of the greatest men of our own land. Thirdly, *Voyages and Travels*, which give the best knowledge of geography, in all its extent, and are especially useful in enlarging the views of those persons, who, from their calling in life, cannot see much of the world. Fourthly, Books about *Natural Philosophy and Chemistry*; particularly those which suggest many easy experiments. Fifthly, Books of *Natural History*; some branch of which you may so far pursue as to make collections. Sixthly, *Poetry*; the choicest works of the great masters. And if in no one of these six chambers of knowledge you find entertainment, I must turn you over to the incurable ward of novel-reading spinsters and peevish newsmongers.

XII.

THE WORKING-MAN IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE.

“ In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he rear'd ; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthen'd and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.”

The Excursion.

ALTHOUGH I have said so much in another place about the ways and means of gaining knowledge amidst the greatest difficulties, I cannot refrain from touching once more upon this favourite topic.* For those who have at heart the mental improvement of working-men, ought constantly to keep before their minds the truth, that there is nothing in their situation which need debar them from the attainment of even eminence in literature and science. Most of our young men, however, sit down in a sort of stupor or despondency, as if they said to themselves,—“ Others may deal with books ; but we, who must

* See a great number of instances in the *American Mechanic*, pp. 161—275.

work for a living, have no time for such entertainments." There are a great many in whom the desire of knowledge has never yet been awakened. There are the two Riddles, twin-brothers, working at the same trade; I see those young men almost daily, and perceive in their countenances and discourse every sign of intelligence; yet I dare say they no more think of making any advances in learning, than of becoming governors of states. Yet half an hour a day, properly bestowed, would make them men of valuable information in every common branch of science.

If I should urge John Crispin to apply himself to books, he would perhaps drop his lapstone and hammer, and exclaim, "What! a shoemaker get learning!" Yes; certainly. Why not? Joseph Pendrell, William Gifford, and Robert Bloomfield were all shoemakers, and all men of learning. Roger Sherman was a shoemaker, and he became first a congress-man and then a judge. He had no education but that of the common-school, and worked at his trade for some time after he was of age. He used to sit at his bench with a book open before him, giving to reading every moment that his eyes could be spared. In later life, men of the most finished education were accustomed to look up to him with reverence. Mr. Macon once said, "Roger Sherman had more common sense than any man I ever knew." Mr. Jefferson once exclaimed, as he pointed to him, "That is Mr. Sherman, of Connecticut, who never

said a foolish thing in his life." He was a true Christian, a defender of virtue, and a daily student of the Bible.

In like manner, my friend Shem Blue, the carpenter, would stare if I should hint to him the possibility of mixing a little study with his work. But I could tell him of SAMUEL LEE, one of the greatest linguists now living, who once handled the plane and chisel. He began to learn the carpenter's trade at the age of twelve, and was seventeen before he ever thought of foreign tongues. He began with the Latin, in order to understand the quotations in English books. By dint of saving and pinching himself, he would buy volume after volume at book-stalls, and, reading at night, went on till he had gained some knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac. His learning brought him into notice; he became a school-master, and at length a clergyman and professor. Now I do not advise our young carpenters to study the dead languages, unless they feel an irresistible bent towards them; but I press on them this instance to show, that a little self-denial and perseverance will enable them to lay in a great stock of useful knowledge, such as may fit them for the most intelligent society; and perhaps raise them to high office. A leading journal of New York informs us that but a few years ago JOSEPH RITNER, late governor of Pennsylvania, cracked his whip and whistled to his six horse team as briskly as any other wagoner who crossed the Alleghanies

THOMAS EWING, a most distinguished senator, was once known chiefly as an athletic woodsman. But there is perhaps no instance of successful study, in the midst of labour, which is more encouraging than that of the blacksmith whose history has been given to the public through his own letter to Governor Everett of Massachusetts. This sketch should not be confined to the newspapers.

“I was the youngest,” says the writer, “of many brethren, and my parents were poor. My means of education were limited to the advantages of a district school, and those again were circumscribed by my father’s death, which deprived me, at the age of fifteen, of those scanty opportunities which I had previously enjoyed. A few months after his decease, I apprenticed myself to a blacksmith in my native village. Thither I carried an indomitable taste for reading, which I had previously acquired through the medium of the society library; all the historical works in which I had at that time perused. At the expiration of a little more than half my apprenticeship, I suddenly conceived the idea of studying Latin. Through the assistance of my elder brother, who had himself obtained a collegiate education by his own exertions, I completed my Virgil during the evenings of one winter. After some time devoted to Cicero and a few other Latin authors, I commenced the Greek. At this time it was necessary that I should devote every hour of daylight and a part of the evening to the duties of my apprentice-

ship. Still I carried my Greek grammar in my hat, and often found a moment, when I was heating some large iron, when I could place my book open before me against the chimney of my forge, and go through with *tupto, tupteis, tuptei*, unperceived by my fellow-apprentices, and, to my confusion of face, with a detrimental effect to the charge in my fire. At evening, I sat down unassisted and alone to the Iliad of Homer, twenty books of which measured my progress in that language during the evenings of another winter. I next turned to the modern languages, and was much gratified to learn that my knowledge of the Latin furnished me with a key to the literature of most of the languages of Europe.

“ This circumstance gave a new impulse to the desire of acquainting myself with the philosophy, derivation, and affinity of the different European tongues. I could not be reconciled to limit myself in these investigations to a few hours after the arduous labours of the day. I therefore laid down my hammer and went to New Haven, where I recited to native teachers in French, Spanish, German, and Italian. I returned at the expiration of two years to the forge, bringing with me such books in those languages as I could procure. When I had read these books through, I commenced the Hebrew with an awakened desire of examining another field; and by assiduous application I was enabled in a few weeks to read this language with such facility, that I allotted it to myself as a task, to read two chapters in the

Hebrew Bible before breakfast each morning; this and an hour at noon being all the time that I could devote to myself during the day. After becoming somewhat familiar with this language, I looked around me for the means of initiating myself into the fields of oriental literature, and, to my deep regret and concern, I found my progress in this direction hedged up by the want of requisite books. I immediately began to devise means of obviating this obstacle; and, after many plans, I concluded to seek a place as a sailor on board some ship bound to Europe, thinking in this way to have opportunities of collecting at different ports such works in the modern and oriental languages as I found necessary for this object. I left the forge and my native place to carry this plan into execution. I travelled on foot to Boston, a distance of more than a hundred miles, to find some vessel bound to Europe. In this I was disappointed, and while revolving in my mind what steps to take, accidentally heard of the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester. I immediately bent my steps towards this place. I visited the hall of the American Antiquarian Society, and found here, to my infinite gratification, such a collection of ancient, modern, and oriental languages as I never before conceived to be collected in one place; and, sir, you may imagine with what sentiments of gratitude I was affected, when, upon evincing a desire to examine some of these rich and rare works, I was kindly invited to an unlimited participation in all the benefits of this

noble institution. Availing myself of the kindness of the directors, I spent about three hours daily at the hall, which, with an hour at noon, and about three in the evening, make up the portion of the day which I appropriate to my studies, the rest being occupied in arduous manual labour. Through the facilities afforded by this institution, I have been able to add so much to my previous acquaintance with the ancient, modern, and oriental languages, as to be able to read upwards of *fifty* of them with more or less facility."

This, it must be admitted, is an extreme case, and is to be regarded as a prodigy. We cannot expect to see many such blacksmiths, nor do we need them; but the instance proves, as Mr. Everett observed, when he introduced it to the friends of education in Bristol, that the mechanic, the engineer, the husbandman, the trader, have quite as much leisure as the average of men in the learned professions.

Let me close this paper with a remark which may serve as an encouragement to many who late in life begin to regret their neglect of past opportunities. There is such a thing as acquiring wisdom even without many books, and without great learning.

" Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oftimes no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own."*

* Cowper.

XIII.

STUDY BY STEALTH.

“Man’s life, sir, being
So short, and then the way that leads unto
The knowledge of ourselves, so long and tedious,
Each minute should be precious.”

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE busiest men have some moments which they do not spend upon their regular callings: these are the moments which I have so often urged that they should give to study. Strange as some may think it, these unemployed hours often hang heavily even upon those who have been tasked all day. This is the case with all artisans whose work has dead intermissions; with many who only labour by daylight, and with the whole race of city clerks. Where dissipation does not come in, the mind will corrode itself, and become worn by melancholy broodings. This might be happily prevented by a little regular study.

As a remarkable instance of the happy use of time borrowed from sleep, I will give the following account which I have received from a clergyman who was well acquainted with the subject of the narrative.

“In the first settlement of New Virginia, as the great valley west of the Blue Ridge was then

called, one of the greatest inconveniences experienced was the want of schools. In a certain neighbourhood there was a settler who had received an excellent English education, and had brought with him a collection of choice books. This farmer agreed, in the long nights of winter, to give gratuitous instruction to as many of the young men of the neighbourhood as would resort to him. The offer was embraced by many, and among these was a modest, retiring youth who was learning the carpenter's trade. The instructor having observed that this youth, whom I will designate by his initials S. L., had a thirst for learning and was fond of reading, paid particular attention to him, and not only lent him good books, but gave him good advice as to the best method of redeeming time. S. L. profited by this advice, and being obliged to work hard all day, he adopted the practice of rising before day, and spending two hours in reading, before other people were out of bed. This practice grew into a settled habit, and was uniformly pursued through a long life, except when interrupted by bad health or some other unusual circumstance. By industry and economy the young man acquired not only competence but affluence. His house was distinguished for hospitality and good order. But what surprised all strangers, S. L. had acquired a stock of useful knowledge on almost all practical subjects. There were few valuable books in English, then common, with the contents of which

he was not well acquainted. Theology was his favourite pursuit, with all branches of which he had an intimate knowledge. But his reading was extended to all useful subjects. He could converse with the divine upon all the nice points of theology; with the lawyer and politician upon the great principles of natural law; and with the physician on the structure of the human frame, and the nature and cure of the diseases to which it is liable. While his mind was thus richly stored with useful knowledge, he never made any parade of his learning, nor had a semblance of pedantry; indeed, he did not assume any superiority on this account over his more ignorant neighbours. His judgment was as sound and discriminating as his knowledge was extensive; and his truth and integrity were never called in question. As a magistrate, as an elder, as an arbitrator, he was held in high esteem; and as the patron of literary institutions.

“In his latter years he took occasion to speak in the way of affectionate advice to a descendant of his early instructor, on which occasion he said, ‘I feel it to be my duty to use this freedom towards the grandson of one to whom I owe all the little knowledge that I possess. It was your grandfather’s counsel, and his lending me books that first put me in the way of reading and acquiring useful knowledge; and therefore I cannot but feel interested in the temporal and spiritual welfare of his offspring.’”

Dr. Johnson used to relate, that he was once applied to by a man who was clerk to a very eminent trader, and who was half-crazed with some scrupulosity of conscience. "I asked him," said Johnson, "when he left the counting-house of an evening? 'At seven o'clock, sir.' 'And when do you go to bed, sir?' 'At twelve o'clock.' 'Then,' replied I; 'I have at least learned thus much by my new acquaintance—that five hours of the four-and-twenty unemployed are enough for a man to go mad in: so I would advise you, sir, to study algebra, if you are not an adept already in it; your head would get less muddy.'"* In correspondence with this, the same great scholar used to advise young people never to be without a book in their pocket, to be read at times when they had nothing else to do. "It has been by that means," said he one day to a boy at Mr. Thrale's, "that all my knowledge has been gained, except what I have picked up by running about the world with my wits ready to observe, and my tongue ready to talk."

Learn to husband your odd moments. While a companion keeps you out of employment you may gain a new idea. I have been acquainted with a man who committed to memory much valuable matter while he was shaving; and have known many who were accustomed to read on horseback; one of these being the late learned and eloquent Dr. Speece of Virginia. Since the

* Croker's Boswell: 1781.

application of steam to spinning, those who attend the *mules* may read during the intervals. A mule spinner in England told Mr. Tuffnell, that in this manner he had perused several volumes. While dinner waits, one may study a minute, or even write. "I had heard," says Madame de Genlis, "that M. d'Aguesseau had written in a few years four volumes quarto, by employing the fifteen minutes a day which Madame d'Aguesseau occupied in arranging her dress before coming down to dinner. I profited by the example. The hour of dinner at the Palais Royal was fixed at two, but the Duchesse de Chartres was never ready for a quarter of an hour later; and when I came down at the appointed time, I was always desired to wait fifteen or twenty minutes. I spent that time in writing in a distinct and small hand a selection of poetry from various authors." Here is a lesson, the benefit of which need not be confined to lords and ladies. In shops, and factories, and sitting-rooms, and nurseries, the same thing may be attempted. Make the most of reading aloud. Where there is a room full of people, one who has leisure may thus instruct a dozen, or a score; provided the work is not noisy. In country places, or where operations are carried on at home, a little child may instruct the whole family. The wife and daughters may hear as well as sew. Indeed, it needs but little contrivance, in some large families, to have some instruction or entertainment going on all the while.

There are few men who do not undervalue what may be attained drop by drop. But rocks are worn away thus, and fortunes are made thus. Through the little slit in the counter, pence and sixpences fall into the till, which in the end make the tradesman's fortune. Why should not knowledge be gained in the same way? That it is not, is generally because it is not sought; no plan is laid; no effort begun. "It is astonishing," says Sir Walter Scott, "how far even half an hour a day, regularly bestowed on one object, will carry a man in making himself master of it. The habit of dawdling away time is easily acquired, and so is that of putting every moment either to use or amusement." In order to gain the most, the book must be chosen, to prevent all vacillation; and in the very spot, to prevent all delay. It is well if it be in the pocket, or on the bench, or ready opened at the place in the window-seat. O! who but those who have experienced it can tell the rapture with which knowledge is gathered in these hurried moments! What is thus read cannot but stick fast. The man who studies thus keeps his mind always on the alert. While the wealthy scholar often lounges away whole afternoons on the sofa of his library, unable to fix upon a topic of study, the poor fellow who hangs over a book-stall, or snatches a moment from his work, is enjoying a paradise of intellectual satisfaction. These are the cheap pleasures which can be caught only under pressure: for there are

joys peculiar to men in straits. I have cited Johnson: his greatest attainments were made during his greatest poverty. At one time, when he was called upon by a learned friend, he had but one chair in his apartment, and that stood on three legs: he probably enjoyed his books as much as when his library consisted of five thousand volumes. Every child knows the avidity with which he poaches among forbidden books. Little Walter Scott used to creep out of bed and read for several hours by fire-light: no man has done more to lay similar temptations in the way of others. In fine, where there is a will there will be a way; and there is nothing so much to be deplored as the stupid indifference with which many who most need the awakening influence of letters, will receive all my suggestions. Yet, if one in five hundred be helped up a single round of the ladder, I shall be of good cheer still.

XIV.

THE ART OF DRAWING VALUABLE TO
MECHANICS.

“From hence the rudiments of art began;
A coal, or chalk, first imitated man:
Perhaps the shadow, taken on a wall,
Gave outlines to the rude original.”

DRYDEN.

MANY persons look upon drawing as a mere accomplishment; something fitted for the misses of a boarding-school, or the parlour of a travelling dandy. This is a very partial and absurd view of the subject. However the art may be abused, as the sister art of writing also is, it is, in many respects, and to many persons, one of the useful rather than the fine arts. It has been properly said, by Mr. Rembrandt Peale, that writing is nothing else than drawing the forms of letters; and drawing is little more than writing the forms of objects.

If proper methods were employed, the art might be very advantageously introduced into the primary instruction of every school. It has a manifest tendency to cultivate the faculty of accurate observation, and there is no trade in which *form* is concerned, to which it may not contribute in a

high degree. The architect and the painter must of course be draftsmen ; but we may add to these every trade which regards decoration. To have freedom and grace in sketching is of value to weavers, upholsterers, paper-hangers, coach-makers and trimmers, calico-printers, silver-platers, turners, and many other classes of artisans which need not now be named.

Almost a century ago, in 1741, the Bishop of St. Asaph published a sermon upon the then unpopular subject of general education, in which are found the following remarkable suggestions, which it seems to be reserved for our age to carry into execution. “Several gentlemen of great knowledge in business, true friends to these schools, and prudently desirous to establish a suitable plan of education in them, have yet been of opinion, that if the children were taught, as they might be at small expense, something of the *art of drawing*, it would prove beneficial in several respects. For this they urge the great perfection to which silk manufactures are now advanced in England, so as to equal if not exceed a rival nation in that commodity, except in the figure, and what is called the fancy of a pattern, which this instruction might supply : that in France the very poorest of the children are all taught to draw ; that the benefits of that branch of skill are very great, for it not only multiplies persons capable of drawing patterns, and thereby lessens the expense to the manufacturer, but likewise greatly assists in the

performance of the work itself, as a workman who can himself draw a pattern will finish with greater truth and greater despatch, any given pattern, whether drawn by his own or by another hand." 'The same remarks, with little alteration, might be applied to the work of cabinet-makers, moulders, founders, and especially the makers and decorators of porcelain and other fine ware.

In 1835, a report was printed by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, on the state of arts as applied to manufactures; in this a number of statements occur, which confirm the view I am now presenting. As it regards the silk-manufacture, Mr. Skene testified that the English workmen copied their patterns almost entirely from the French. As to the uses of design, Mr. Harrington, an eminent silk-manufacturer, said to the committee:—"We would willingly, at the present time, engage a man at a handsome salary, conversant with the principle of weaving, as a designer, and also to put the pattern upon paper." 'The importance of cultivated taste in drawing, even with respect to iron-manufacture, will appear from the evidence of Mr. Smith, of Sheffield, a partner in a house which expends about six thousand dollars a year in models for stove grates and fenders; this gentleman declaring that he would not hesitate to spend two or three hundred pounds in a model for a grate, if the pattern were protected. Let the reader call to mind American stoves, in which a Gothic structure has been supported by four

claw-feet! Messrs. Rundell and Bridge, the celebrated jewellers, employed a person to design for them, to whom they paid more than two thousand dollars a year, and supplied him with a house to live in. Charles Toplis, Esq., a vice-president of the London Mechanics' Institute, gave in evidence as his opinion that drawing was of high value to a large portion of inventive artisans. "All works of construction," says he, "require to be preceded by a design on paper, or a proportionate delineation, which is often to be done by the workman himself. Workmen in these branches must therefore be necessarily trained to the accurate use of drawing-instruments, and their operations are frequently much assisted when they can express their designs by sketches made by the unguided hand. The workmen whose province it is to shape and give form to materials, are greatly aided in their operations when they can delineate the contours of the forms they wish to impart, or can model them in a yielding matter; and their taste is necessarily improved by studying the selected forms set before them for imitation during the course of their instruction in drawing or modelling." Again: "In the porcelain manufacture," says Mr. Toplis, "it is requisite that a painter there should be able to paint landscapes and other natural objects, perhaps to compose pictures; but at all events he should be able to copy a landscape and other representation accurately."

The interior decoration of houses, whether by

means of the builder and joiner, or the painter, paper-hanger, and upholsterer, presents a wide field for the display of taste and genius in the art of design. In the examination before the committee of the House of Commons, Mr. Cockerell, the distinguished architect, explained the opinions of the ancient Greeks on this subject. "We know," said he, "that a stranger who established a new branch of manufacture in Athens obtained the rights of a citizen. Athens and Ægina were the greatest manufactories of Greece in all works connected with fine arts. The artists of Ægina had more commissions in all parts of Greece than any other nation. The manufacture of bronzes, especially candelabra, is celebrated by Pliny." Mr. C. H. Smith, a sculptor of architectural ornaments, stated to the committee, that he always found those workmen who could draw, if ever so little, were more useful to him than those who were totally unable to use a pencil. "I recently," said he, "sent my foreman into Yorkshire with work; on his arrival, he found difficulties arose which he had not (nor had I) anticipated; but by letter to me, illustrated by his sketches, he explained all that I could wish for." There are many cases in which an exact draft will enable an architect or workman to ascertain, without calculation, the extent and direction of lines which, but for this, would demand the most abstruse investigations of mathematics. I have also been informed by a gentleman much conversant with

such matters, that in cases where there is doubt as to the strength of materials or other qualities of large engines, manufacturers find great advantage in making a draught of the size of nature, from the inspection of which they can form conjectures approaching to absolute accuracy. It is believed that our great Fulton, in his long train of experiments, received incalculable aid from his expertness in the art of design; for he was not merely a draughtsman, but a master of painting and perspective.

It is stated by Mr. Guillotte, a maker of the Jacquard looms, that art is much cheaper in France than in England; of course far cheaper than in America. A French capitalist employs three or four artists, where in England one artist would supply eight or ten manufacturers. Thus, in England, the designer of the pattern and he who transfers it to the manufacture are distinct persons; in France, the workman is himself the artist. "The French," says Mr. Cockerell, "have long been celebrated for their attention to design in manufactures. Their zeal in this pursuit is nowhere more manifest than in their recent prosecution of the shawl trade—in the introduction both of the material and pattern of the Cachemire shawl by M. Fernaux, and in the later investigations of M. Couder. M. Couder has established a school for shawl designs at Paris."

In Prussia, the national system includes instruction in the principles of art. There are four

schools of design, at Breslau, Königsberg, Dantzic, and Cologne. Professor Beuth, the director of the Trade Institution at Berlin, several years ago published a work at the expense of the government, with copperplate engravings of models from the ancients and the middle ages, for the use of the pupils. "It is stated," says the committee above named, "that the influence of Prof. Beuth's publication is already perceptible in the shops and dwelling-houses at Berlin." Drawing is taught in every school in Bavaria. At Bruges, gratuitous instruction in drawing is given to six or seven hundred young men, and prizes are awarded annually; something of the same kind is observed at Antwerp. Besides this encouragement, it may be mentioned that in England cotton-prints are protected for three months. In France, when a boy draws well, and shows genius, he is in great demand among the leading houses, and is often fortunate enough to be taken as a partner.

Many facts might be stated, which would show that far more attention is paid to this useful art in France and Switzerland than among ourselves. Among these a striking one is extracted from M. Simond's *Switzerland*. "M. de Candolle, Professor of Botany at Geneva, but whose reputation is European, made use, in a course of lectures, of a very valuable collection of drawings of American plants, intrusted to him by a celebrated Spanish botanist, who having occasion for this collection sooner than was expected, sent for it back again.

M. de Candolle, having communicated the circumstance to his audience, with the expression of his regrets, some ladies who attended the lectures offered to copy, with the aid of some of their friends, the whole collection in a week; and the task was actually performed. The drawings, eight hundred and sixty in number, and filling thirteen folio volumes, were executed by one hundred and fourteen female artists; one of the ladies indeed did forty of them. In most cases, the principal parts only of each plant are coloured, the rest only traced with accuracy: the execution in general very good, and in some instances quite masterly. There is not, perhaps, another town of twenty-three thousand souls, where such a number of female artists, the greater part of course amateurs, could be found." The instance is in point to show how easily and how widely a degree of skill in this art may be diffused. 'That which is learned by so many may be easily learned.

I hope some readers of these hints will be led forthwith to furnish themselves with drawing materials. The extensive class of house-painters contains many who might rise to great eminence. Let me address them in the language of one of their own craft, Mr. D. R. Hay of Edinburgh. He was asked by the committee, "What do you consider the best line of study for persons intended for a profession like your own, or best adapted to improve the taste of the working-class generally?" He replied; "It is in the first place to initiate

them in the drawing of large symmetrical figures by the hand." Symmetrical figures are such as squares, ovals, and circles. They should then practise undulations and volutes. Their attention should then be directed to the vegetable kingdom, and they should begin their practice by studying from large well-developed leaves. All the common woods, that grow in such profusion by our hedge-rows and road-sides, as also in the wildest and most sterile parts of the country, are worthy of the study and attention of those who wish to improve their taste in regard to what is really elegant or beautiful in form. Both grace and elegance of form are to be found in the common dock, the thistle, the fern, or even in a stalk of corn or barley. The study of such objects is within the reach of all classes; and those who thus form their taste, when they come to study the ornamental remains of Greece and Rome, will find themselves familiar with the source from which such designs are derived.

XV.

THE CULTIVATION OF MEMORY.

“Wealth, gathered long and slowly; thoughts divine
Heap that full treasure-house; and thou hast made
The gems of many a spirit’s ocean thine;
—Shall the dark waters to oblivion bear
A pyramid so fair?”

HEMANS.

THIS paper may catch the eye of some young man whose earnest desire it is to improve his mind, and who is carrying on, to the best of his ability, the work of self-education. Such a one, I take for granted, will not despise any suggestions bearing on his main pursuit, from an unknown adviser who has long been making an endeavour of the very same kind. My remarks are intended to bear upon a single faculty; that is to say, on the memory.

Words would be wasted if I were to set about the task of showing the importance of the human memory. But while all acknowledge this, I do not believe there is one of our intellectual powers which is more neglected and even abused, and this even in our courses of popular education; and, if I err not, it is a fault which becomes every day more common. The error of former ages

was one directly opposite; and as extremes often concur, it still shows itself in some particular branches of study; but the popular method leaves memory very much in the background.

There is nothing in which there is more quackery than in our public schools; and this is no longer wonderful, when we consider in how many cases the instruction of youth is the dernier resort of those who can make their bread in no other way. An active competition springs up between rival teachers, and every means is used to give eclat and notoriety. It is the vanity of our age to be philosophic; the phrase is applied to every thing. We are all philosophers. We all babble concerning Bacon, and the Inductive Philosophy. Thousands who have never got the first notion of what an induction is, descant upon this or that school or school-book as being on the principles of the inductive system. Our babes learn the A B C on the principles of the immortal Bacon.

All this would be very innocent, if it were not made a stalking-horse for the introduction of noxious errors in education; and you had better filch a purse from me, than set me awry in bringing up my children. It is a part of this rigmarole of smattering teachers, to declare that all the old ways of teaching were slavish and useless. I agree that, in some respects, some of them were so. As a general declaration, however, it is far from being true. Our new instructors teach philosophically. They educe the mind. They are

resolved to teach nothing but what the child can understand as it goes along. Therefore all the old rules and antiquated catechisms are thrust aside; they are a mere load of undigested stuff upon the mind. The little infant prattlers are forsooth to analyze every thing. They chop logic with you. Every thing is made gaudy and attractive; all rules become illustrations; and all journeying to science is on the royal road.

Of other evils consequent upon this method it is not within my scope to speak, but I adduce its bad effects in the affair above mentioned. According to this plan the memory is an inferior power, to be used as little as possible; and as a matter of fact it is immeasurably less tasked in all our public schools, than it was thirty years ago. Everywhere, among young men, I hear the most honest complaints about defect of memory; and if things go on as they have begun, we shall do all within our power to reduce it to imbecility. I appeal to the experience and observation of parents: let us come to plain fact. Do your children commit to memory as much as you used to do? I ask not whether it is for better or for worse, but do they bring home as many evening-tasks as you once did? Do the boys make the house resound with passages out of Milton and Dryden, and with "capping verses"? Do the girls carry in their memory, as you used to do, scores of fine extracts from Pope and Thomson? Your reply will attest the truth of my remark, that this faculty is neglected

in our schools: we may have some indemnity, but unquestionably the memory is not improved.

This is a clear going backwards. Nor is it single; it is part and parcel of a system. The plan of the age comprises, the spirit of the age almost insures, this very thing. Look about among your friends; compare the young with the old. I venture to anticipate your conclusion; you find the memory of the latter more rich in special deposits of knowledge than the former; more fine old ingots of fact and poetry laid up in treasure. This is one of the evils attendant on a great blessing: it is the tax we pay for the multiplicity of our books. Where books are many, we can only touch and go, as travellers drink of springs by the way; where they are few, we resort to them again and again, as men drink out of their own wells. The poor man with few books is observed, even in our day, to peruse and reperuse until he has mastered their whole contents. Before the invention of printing this was often the case; as it now is in those Mohammedan countries where all books are in manuscript. The poems of Homer were repeated for generations by strolling rhapsodists, or minstrels, before they were committed to writing; and long after they were transcribed, they were in whole or in large part treasured in the minds of the people. It was said in my hearing by Dr. Wolff, the celebrated missionary, that a European or American would be astonished at the number of persons in Persia

who know by rote all the productions of their principal poets.

Among the Mohammedans it is a common achievement to commit the Koran to memory. The following Egyptian anecdote is related in Mr. Lane's "Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians :"—

"A man was employed in Cairo to be a school-master. He could neither read nor write, but he could recite the Koran from beginning to end. His plan was, to hear the boys repeat their lessons, which are always in this book. As to the writing, he employed the head-boy in the school to attend to this, pretending that his eyes were weak. A few days after he had taken upon himself this office, a poor woman brought a letter for him to read to her from her son, who had gone on pilgrimage. He pretended to read it, but said nothing; and the woman, inferring from his silence that the letter contained bad news, said to him, 'Shall I shriek?' He answered, 'Yes.' 'Shall I rend my clothes?' He answered, 'Yes.' So the poor woman returned to her house, and with her assembled friends performed the lamentation and other ceremonies usual on the occasion of death. Not many days after this her son arrived, and she asked him what he could mean by giving her such an alarm. The explanation was given, the letter was produced, and the teacher was called to account for his imposture. His ready apology was: 'God alone knows futurity! How could I

know that your son would arrive in safety? It was better that you should think him dead, than expect to see him and be disappointed.' ”

As to the Jews, it is not only a common thing for them to have the whole Hebrew Bible in their memory, but also large portions of the Talmud, which is a collection of comments five or six times as extensive. One of their own chroniclers relates a fact which illustrates this observation. In the seventh century the copies of the Talmud became very scarce in Persia, in consequence of one of those hideous persecutions to which this unconquerable race has been so often subjected. A celebrated Rabbi, fearing lest the precious work should be irreparably lost, fell upon the happy expedient of consigning it, in portions, to the memory of his several scholars, giving to each a single treatise. At the appointed time the scholars were assembled, and the immense work was rehearsed without the error of a jot or tittle. Strange as this legend may seem, I think it right to say, that it is cited with credence by an eminent German author of our day, who adds this declaration: “ Even now, I would wager, that the same experiment would have a like result. The most orthodox Jews, those most attached to the Talmud, among all who live in Europe, are to be found in Lithuania and Poland. Now let the prince who reigns over them send forth an edict through his extensive dominions, that at the end of three months every Talmud shall be delivered up and

destroyed, except a single one with which to make the trial. Within four months the Jews will produce twelve rabbins who shall repeat the contents of the work word for word."* Indeed, a Jew has exhibited himself in London within the last few months, who publicly submitted to a trial in proof of his having every word of this immense mass in his memory.

It would be tedious to recite the instances of amazing memory given in ancient books. Themistocles learned to speak Persian in a year. Mithridates knew two-and-twenty languages. Crassus professed to be familiar with five dialects of the Greek tongue. Cyrus remembered the names of all his soldiers.† Theodectes could repeat any number of verses which were read to him. Erasmus knew all Terence and Horace by heart; and Beza could repeat the Psalms in Hebrew, and St. Paul's epistles in Greek. The great Pascal, in modern times, had a memory from which nothing seemed to escape. In our own country Dr. Nisbet, once president of Dickinson College, is reported to have known every line in Virgil. But I am becoming prolix, and must therefore take a fresh pen for the more practical part of my subject.

* Professor Gfrörer, of Stuttgart, in his *History of Primitive Christianity*.

† Quintilian, *Inst. Orat.* lib. xi. 2.

XVI.

THE CULTIVATION OF MEMORY.

Continued.

“The busy power
 Of memory her ideal train preserves
 Entire ; or when they would elude her watch,
 Reclaims their fleeting footsteps from the waste
 Of dark oblivion.”

AKENSIDE.

ARISTOTLE held, as I am told by the schoolmaster, that all remembrance is owing to a physical impression made on the brain. Thus he is enabled to account for the quickness and shortness of memory in children ; because the brain of the little one is soft, and therefore easily takes a mark, and as easily loses it. On the other hand, the brain of old men is tough and rigid, so that it neither takes nor loses an impression with facility. This theory is exploded, but it still serves to illustrate the principle that it is in early life that the memory must be chiefly disciplined. This is a most important truth in education, but very much overlooked in the pretended philosophy of education. It is important as directing us to the proper studies for our children. There are some things which we must teach them now, because they

cannot learn them so well hereafter: there are other things which we must teach them hereafter, because they cannot learn them any better, if even so well, now. The things which children should learn now, are all those which exercise memory rather than reason: such is whatever concerns language, and whatever it is important to remember in certain terms. All rules and forms which will be perpetually coming into play in subsequent studies or in active life, should be deeply engraven upon the memory. Rules of grammar, religious catechisms, and the words of Holy Scripture are especially of this sort. And that parent is trifling with the future happiness and usefulness of his child, who allows himself to be decoyed into the absurd rule of inculcating nothing upon the memory until it can be comprehended by the understanding.

But I must leave the children, and return to the young men. What are they to do? And especially what are they to do, if they have heretofore been neglected? Is there any chance of redeeming lost opportunities? or rather, is there not occasion for despair? One of my maxims about every thing is, *Never despair*: another maxim is, *Never stand still*; that is, never, in youth or age, allow yourself to think you have reached the *ne plus ultra*. Resolve to reform every error, to cure every disorder, and to supply every defect, as long as you live. Instead therefore of indulging in pusillanimous complaints and indolent wishes about the defects of your memory, set about sup-

plying them. The very thing I am writing for is to induce you to undertake this very work. Your whole success depends upon two quite simple principles :

FIRST. *The memory must be exercised.* The law of all our powers, of mind and body, is the same. They grow in proportion to their healthful exercise. It is so with muscles. Compare the arm of the tailor with that of the blacksmith or the woodman. Compare the voice of the chimney-sweep with that of the silent house-servant. Compare your own hand with that of your neighbour whose way of life is the reverse of your own. If your memory is weak, it is probably from want of exercise. Not but that there are great original diversities ; but still there is not more than one in five hundred whose memory might not be improved to a degree sufficient for every useful purpose. You have either been entirely neglected, or the discipline of your memory, having been attended to in your childhood, has since been intermitted. If the former, you have no recollection of any labours in this kind ; if the latter, you find it much harder to get any thing by rote than once you did. Whichever of these is the case, you are now to begin, and practise, by suitable degrees. Though it is a faculty which admits of being put upon immense exertions where it has been trained, it must be brought up from decay by degrees. You must commit to memory, as a task. The task must

be frequently renewed, and the matters given in charge to the memory must be increased by very slow degrees.

My friend, the schoolmaster, declares to me that he has seen the most astonishing cures wrought among his lads. He has a number of little rules respecting memory, which are worth being recorded. Here are some of them.

Memory depends on three things.

1. *Attention.* Attend and you will remember. The more you attend, the better will you remember. Great fixedness of attention will burn the thing into your mind. Perhaps the whole of your difficulty has this origin. If so, you must go back one step, and cultivate the habit of concentrating your thoughts.

2. *Repetition.* Repeat and you will remember. Drop after drop wears away rocks. But a particular sort of repetition must be recommended: Repeat and examine yourself. This is the remark of Lord Bacon, and almost every child has tried the experiment: "You will not so easily learn a piece of writing by rote by reading it over twenty times, as by reading it over ten times and trying every time to recite it, looking at the book whenever you fail."*

3. *Associations of pleasure or pain.* Even a dog remembers where he has been whipped, and an ox where he has been watered. It was the

* Bacon, Nov. Org. lib. ii. Aph. 28.

custom, in old times, in England, to whip the boys of a neighbourhood at each of the march-stones, or division marks between parishes; in order to fix it in their memories. The Choctaws are said to inculcate their traditions upon the young people, in a similar way. I would not, indeed, prescribe self-flagellation, great as its virtues are supposed to be in some orders of monks, but would strenuously recommend it to you, to call up as vivid associations of a pleasurable kind as you can around those things which you endeavour to remember.

The schoolmaster declares that he is convinced the ancients were right in enjoining it on their scholars when they wished to learn any thing with remarkable ease, to sleep upon it; that is to rehearse it just before going to rest, and just after rising.

SECOND. *The memory must be trusted.* This principle is not less important than the foregoing, though less obvious. Those have the most accurate, prompt, and faithful recollection, who confide most to their memory. It is a jealous faculty, and does not willingly see its functions assigned to another. Men who make it their habit to carry every thing in their heads, seldom blunder; men who jot down every thing are lost without their tablets. The penny-post knows a list of more names and numbers than you or I could commit to memory in a week. A respectable merchant lately said to me, "I have scarcely any memory,

and I attribute it to the habit of our business, in which we never trust any thing to our recollection, without an entry in some book." Judge Y——, of New York, used to declare that without his notes of evidence he could not aver that this or that witness had made any observation. This agrees with what is said by old Montaigne: "I can do nothing," says he, "without my memorandum-book; and so great is my difficulty in remembering proper names, that I am forced to call my domestic servants by their offices." On the other hand, the schoolmaster relates of Hortensius, the great rival of Cicero, that he could attend a protracted auction, and then at the end of the sale give as accurate a list of items and prices as the clerks who kept minutes. I can believe this the more readily from what I have myself known of an analogous feat in an eminent merchant of a southern city.

Practise then upon the maxim, to intrust every thing to your memory which may be done so *safely*. What we sometimes hear about "overburdening the memory" is the mere cant of a false philosophy. Memory is not a beast of burden. No man ever realized the threatened evil. We may make our memory labour to weariness at one time; so may we do with the judgment. But in neither case is it the multitude of particulars which distresses the mind. We may again charge the memory with what is useless or injurious; but this is clearly distinct from going beyond its

capacity. We may further try to remember too much. But that any pain or other evil is consequent from the mere amount of things actually remembered, I resolutely deny. Trust your memory therefore. Beware of an inordinate use of common-place books. They have their use; but you will often find that a great transcriber into such volumes leaves all his stores behind him when he shuts his study-door. And I have heard the schoolmaster read passages out of Bayle, going to show that all common-place books were condemned by several of the most learned men of former days; as by Saumaise or Salmasius, by Menage, and by Govean; the last of whom went so far that he would not admit pen and ink into his library, lest transcription should interrupt his thinking and impair his memory.* It must be confessed that this would be ruinous to a poor writer of scraps, such as myself.

* Bayle's Dict. art. *Ancillon*.

XVII.

THE WORKING-MAN'S JOURNEYS.

“Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits.”

Two Gentlemen of Verona.

THE ease with which we go from one place to another makes us a travelling people, perhaps to as great an extent as is true of any equal number of persons in the world. Go when you will upon any of the great thoroughfares, as between Boston and Providence, between Baltimore and Philadelphia, or especially between Philadelphia and New York, and you find the steamers, cars, and coaches filled with wanderers. I never cease to wonder as to what may be the impelling motive with so great a number, for so long a period. I have nevertheless been led to the opinion that our artisans do not travel a great deal, or even as much as several other classes which might be named. It is true they, like their neighbours, must sometimes change their place. When work is dull in one town they go to another, and there are thus two streams of workmen perpetually setting between our two great cities; while, in a smaller degree, a similar circulation of labour is kept up through the whole country. There is also a cur-

rent of emigrants to the west, and in this there is always a considerable infusion of mechanical labour. But still, whatever may be done from necessity, mechanics as a class do not jaunt about much for pleasure, or for the purpose of gaining those particular advantages which have been supposed to result from travelling. Yet the mechanic often needs recreation and change of air; and where his business admits of it, it would be well if he could more frequently roam a little over the face of our wide land. In some countries, it is thought so important for young mechanics to travel for improvement in their craft, that it is enjoined by law. This is particularly the case in the German states, and deserves consideration from our enterprising mechanics. A German artisan is not thought to have completed his education until he has spent some months or years in working abroad. The custom is very ancient, and arose in a time when the modes of communicating knowledge which we now have were altogether unknown. There were, in that day, no Builder's or Millwright's Guides, no Manuals for Weavers, Watchmakers, or Dyers, no Tailor's Magazines. Men of trades as well as men of letters were forced to go from place to place, in order to pick up the nicer operations of their craft. The stream of travel naturally tended from the ruder to the more civilized nations. In the middle ages, when Germany was rough and Italy refined, the young men who followed in the train

of German princes and nobles on their expeditions to the south, brought back new trades and new methods from Tuscany or Venice. From being an accidental thing it grew to be imperative, and the 'Guilds or *Trades' Unions* of that day made it a condition of entrance into their bodies, that the applicant should have spent a certain number of years away from the place of his apprenticeship. They regarded this as indispensably necessary to the dignity and improvement of their calling.

This was very important when every art was a mystery, and when the sleight of a clever workman was as sacred as the nostrum of a quack. It was often but little of a trade that the master-workman could give his boys; and even where he was skilled, he too frequently kept his own secret, or set on it an exorbitant price. To acquire the higher polish of the art, a young man must go through other countries, and pick up as much as possible of their improvements. In this *wander-jahre*, or year of wandering, the journeyman found many things to learn. He saw some or all the materials of his daily operations, in their place of origin, or in great factories; he consulted with celebrated artisans, or worked in favoured establishments, and beheld the highest achievements of his art. The manifest tendency of the system was to equalize information, to throw happy inventions into the common stock; to awaken emulation and quicken genius; to enlarge

the views and add to the stock of processes. Besides the acknowledged advantages of all travelling, in an age when there was not much to prevent stagnation of trade, it contributed to lessen the number of hands where there were too many, and to furnish labour abroad when it became scarce.

The system continues to be thought useful, although it is known to labour under some great disadvantages. It tends in many instances to produce roving habits, and affords great facilities for idleness and dissipation. I am therefore very far from recommending any such regular plan for our own country. But to a certain extent our mechanics might take the hint, and avail themselves of some of the advantages of travelling. I have known one carpenter who made a voyage to Europe for the express purpose of gaining new ideas in his business; and I see no reason why it should not be more common with the better class of workmen. Particularly in all that relates to architecture or other decorative arts, it would seem to be highly desirable that the adept should have fully before his mind's eye the greatest works in his own department. Sir John Soane, the son of a bricklayer, was an architect of great eminence, and derived much of his taste and skill from a visit of some years to Rome. But without crossing the seas, our enterprising artisans might contrive to know a little more about one another.

and to make short trips for health at the same time subservient to the progress of their arts. It has been very common for agriculturists to pursue this plan, as in the case of the noted Arthur Young: why should it not yield its fruits to the mechanic arts? If the young traveller were to keep a few memoranda of his more valuable observations, it would be a useful exercise for his mind, and would be useful in subsequent years. And if no objection can be raised against this but an indisposition to expend a few dollars, I can only say that this frugality would be much more wisely applied to other and less profitable indulgences. Before leaving this subject, I ought to remind my young readers, that in their journeys for pleasure or business, they may gain a large increase of knowledge from all the strangers into whose company they are thrown. Experience soon teaches the traveller, that there is no one from whom either amusement or information may not be extracted. "For ourselves," says Sir Walter Scott, "we can assure the reader—and perhaps if we have ever been able to afford him amusement, it is owing in a great degree to this cause—that we never found ourselves in company with the stupidest of all possible companions in a post-chaise, or with the most arrant cumber-corner that ever occupied a place in the mail-coach, without finding that, in the course of our conversation with him, we had some ideas suggested to us,

either grave or gay, or some information communicated in the course of our journey, which we should have regretted not to have learned, and which we should be sorry to have immediately forgotten.”

XVIII.

APPRENTICES.

“Ye masters, then,
Be mindful of the rough, laborious hand
That sinks you soft in elegance and ease;
Be mindful of those limbs in russet clad
Whose toil to yours is warmth and graceful pride.”

THOMSON.

IF every thing is ever effectually done in this country, towards elevating the industrious classes to their due place in society, the work must begin with those who are in youth. In regard to mind, manners, or morals, we cannot expect very great improvement in those who have passed middle life: our endeavours should be directed to the apprentice.

The relation of master and apprentice was a closer and a warmer one in former days. The lad was willing to allow that he had a *master*, for a certain time and a certain purpose, and in expectation of being one day a master himself. He thought this was no more disgraceful, than the subordination of the scholar to his teacher, or the soldier to his captain. And, in return, the employer felt a responsibility proportioned to his authority. Good men were accustomed to treat

their apprentices as their sons ; they gave them many little instructions out of the line of the trade, and had an eye to their religious duties. It is unnecessary to say, that the state of things is very much altered. Insubordination, radicalism, and a false and impracticable theory of equal rights, have destroyed the gentle authority which used to exist. The whole affair of indentures, as my readers very well know, is in some places becoming a mere formality. It is less common than it used to be for boys to serve out their whole time. Many influences are at work to make lads impatient, and loth to continue in one place, however good. And when they abscond from their proper service, it is not every employer who now thinks it worth his while to take the legal measures for recovering their time. It is known to those who are conversant with mechanical establishments in our cities, that the old-fashioned system is found to be ineffectual ; so that master-workmen have to try new methods of getting the requisite amount of work from their hands. In some cases, this is effected by small remunerations for task-work. There are many shops in which there are no regular apprentices ; the employers choosing rather to hire such labour as they can get. I have even heard the opinion expressed that the day is not far off when the whole system of apprenticeship will be thrown aside.

The spirit of our age and country is a spirit of restless hurry. We are for quick turns, short

cuts, and sudden results. Amidst the increased risks of human life, seven years is a great portion of the human span. Another trait of our national character is a dislike to all rule, just or unjust. It is natural for a boy to prefer variety to sameness of occupation; and when regular service is no longer compulsory, we must expect to see our youth flying from the severe work of shops to those chance jobs which give bread to so many thousands in our streets.

The effects of this condition of things are manifestly bad. We are falling between two systems. We are slipping away from the old plan of former ages, and have not yet alighted upon a better—one more suited to modern improvements. If boys and youth may serve one year or six years at their own option, if they may run from one employer to another, upon every whim; if they may even exchange their trade two or three times before they come of age,—is it not as plain as day, that the *proportion* of really accomplished workmen must lessen from year to year? And this being the case, several evils must necessarily ensue, which are too obvious to need recital.

But the nature of things does not alter: skilled labour, like other commodities, will find a market, and will bring the highest price. This is beginning to show itself in certain kinds of manufacture, in which foreign artisans are coming in, to the exclusion of our own countrymen. It is as vain as it is unrighteous, for us to fold our arms and

raise an outcry against foreign labour, and form associations of native Americans. If we do not secure the thorough *trade-education* of our own youth, we must expect to see all the finer and more difficult branches taken out of our hands. As a general thing, I am glad to know that this is far from being the case: I speak only of *tendencies*, and I do not think it can be denied that the tendency of the change I have mentioned is to evil.

But there are moral consequences of this relaxation of the old system, which are still more to be deplored. As the tie between the employer and the apprentice becomes slight, there is a lessening of authority on the one side and of duty on the other, as well as of affection on both. We often talk of the advantages of domestic influence, the bonds of the fireside, the charm of home: and on this point it would be hard for us to speak too much, or too enthusiastically. *But where is the apprentice's home?* It is not in his father's house: in the greater number of cases, this is not within reach. It is not his employer's house; at least under the prevailing system, and in our cities and large towns. For this there are various reasons. In great manufactories, where there are at least a dozen boys—these of course cannot be allowed to overrun the employer's house: they are often put out to board elsewhere. In neither case have they a *home*.—Even where there is only an ordinary number, as the master is no longer a parent, the apprentice feels no longer like a son.

Where can he spend his evenings? Not in the garret or loft where he sleeps: in winter it is cold; in summer it is suffocating.—Not in the kitchen: he would be in the way. Not in the sitting-room: that would be too familiar.—Where can he spend the long hours of his Sunday? Let us look the truth in the face: *The apprentice has no home.* Is it any wonder that at night we hear the heavy tramp of their feet upon our pavements as they career along by scores? Is it any wonder that they crowd our oyster-houses, porter-cellars, bar-rooms, shows, and wait for checks about the doors of our theatres?

The moral consequences of this I need not dwell upon: they are open to the day. I am not so chimerical as to propose a return to old ways, or to hang on the wheels of modern improvement. I only urge, that the old system of master and apprentice, when carried out in practice, had certain advantages, which are not provided for in our present methods. If we do not wish our young mechanics to become an easy prey to vice, we must set about some preventive measures. The apprentice must have some agreeable place in which to spend his leisure moments. I am accustomed to see some of the best youth I know, passing their Sundays in the street or the fields. Vice opens many doors to the less scrupulous: surely virtue ought to do as much. For a number of years, it has been my deliberate and unchanged opinion, that no man could bestow a greater benefit

on our working-classes, than he who should devise and offer to apprentices a pleasing, popular, and ever-open resort for their leisure hours, where they might not only feel at home, but be out of the reach of temptation, and in the way of mental improvement. It is worthy of consideration in our Lyceums and Mechanics' Institutes. And if this volume should fall into the hands of any friends of the young mechanic, in such towns or villages as are without Lyceums or Mechanics' Institutions, I would urge on them a new and strenuous effort to procure the establishment of such truly useful associations. The attempt will cost some pains; it will be opposed by some, and sneered at by others, and some will stand aloof and recount the history of similar enterprises, and their failure. But, nevertheless, the thing has been done, and can be done again; and there is no good reason why every town in America should not be adorned by a graceful edifice devoted to the mental improvement of the young artisan.

XIX.

TRADES' UNIONS.

“Heaven forming each on other to depend,
A master, or a servant, or a friend,
Bids each on other for assistance call,
Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all.”
POPE.

UPON the question, *What shall be the wages of labour?* the world of enterprise is naturally divided into two parties. For it is obvious, that the employer will desire to give as little as he can, and the workman to receive as much as he can. And in the great majority of instances, the advantage in this contest has been on the side of the master-workmen, as being able to combine more easily, and to subsist longer without new receipts. This state of things, however, has received a very important disturbance from the expansion of the credit system; which, so far as this controversy is concerned, has brought the two parties more nearly upon a level.

In order to place themselves upon terms of some equality in the contest, it was necessary that operatives should in some way or other combine for mutual support; and in the case of those who are

called "skilled workmen," the effect of such combinations has often been sudden and extensive.

In attempting to raise and keep up wages above their natural rate, various methods have been used. The most obvious is that of refusing to work for less than a certain sum agreed upon; and where the combination is universal or very extensive, this is likely to have its effect in the case of skilled labour. Another method not much unlike this in its principle, is that of combining to lessen the hours of labour, the price remaining the same. A third is that of limiting the number of skilled workmen in any district; and this method has from time to time been embodied in the municipal customs and statutory provisions of many countries. To this source we owe all the guilds or trade-corporations of England, the statutes of apprenticeship, the tours of journeymen (*wanderjahre*) in Germany, and similar expedients; the object being in every case the same, namely, to make labour more costly, by making it more difficult to be procured. Upon the same principle, in some of the Spice Islands, it has been customary to destroy part of the pepper crop in order to raise the price of the commodity.

The corporations of the middle ages were the basis of all our municipal privileges, as indeed they were the cradle of modern civic prosperity in general: they were, in those rude periods, a necessary safeguard for the peaceful burgher against the ruthless and iron-handed barons and

their feudatories. But the state of things has greatly changed with the advancement of society. As the defences of established law have formed themselves around the mechanic and the labourer, those irregular and extraordinary provisions should have been abandoned; as being no less antiquated and no less dangerous than the famous Secret Tribunals of the dark ages; which nevertheless were almost demanded in a state of things where society was in a perpetual conflict :

“For why! Because the good old rule
Sufficed them; the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.”*

But we have lived to see a new growth springing up in the rank soil of modern civilization. In the unexampled increase and mighty influence of Trades' Unions there is every thing to awaken the interest of the political and the moral philosopher. Viewing what has occurred within a few years, we can only say, with Talleyrand, *It is the beginning of the end!* No man can examine the influence of this organization of the working-classes, without perceiving that, unless arrested, it must give origin to a state of society totally different from any that the world has ever seen; whether better or worse than that which has preceded, events will prove.

* Wordsworth.

The early dissensions of republican Rome gave occasion to Menenius Agrippa to rehearse the fable of the Belly and the Members ; an apologue which is no less instructive and appropriate now, than it was then. Nothing can fail to be disorganizing and ruinous, which tends to set the rich against the poor, or marshals these two classes into conflicting hosts. And such is the tendency of that fearful system which is beginning to spread itself among our happy yeomanry.

XX.

TRADES' UNIONS.

Continued.

“ We see, we hear with peril: Safety dwells
Remote from multitude. The world's a school
Of wrong, and what proficients swarm around !
We must or imitate or disapprove ;
Must list as their accomplices or foes.”

YOUNG.

THE true way to judge of Trades' Unions is to see them at home; to examine their working in the place of their origin, and where their influence is most extensive. In this country they are still in their infancy, and we can scarcely see their ultimate tendencies; but in Great Britain and Ireland they have existed for a long period, and we may sit in fair judgment upon their results. Every year brings us nearer and nearer to the transatlantic pattern: we borrow their organization, their methods, their “slang-terms,” and their men. Here, as there, we have our weekly contributions, our forms of initiation, our committees of vigilance, our flags and mottoes and processions. Perhaps in due course of time we may have our burnings, maimings, and assassinations. But be-

fore we allow things to get to this pass, it becomes us to sit down and count the cost. Let us look into some of the reasons *pro* and *contra*.

If a contest were necessary between the rich and the poor, (which we heartily believe it is not, but on the contrary that, in the long run, their interests are identical,) if it were necessary that capital and labour should be placed in conflict—we should be ready to concede that every facility and aid should be allowed to the working-man, because he is under all sorts of disadvantage. This is less true in America, where, for the most part, labour and capital go together; but in Great Britain mechanics and other labourers need every species of lawful union to bear them up against the weight of capital and easy concert which is marshalled on the other side. No man who has a heart can become acquainted with the distresses which exist in the thronged manufactories of Britain, without being tempted to pray that this unnatural system may never become paramount in our own beloved country, where millions of untilled acres still invite the pallid and starving artisan. No wonder the working-classes desire to increase the rewards of labour; no wonder they take pity on their own flesh and blood, and combine to relieve them. And if wages, by any such expedient, could be made to rise and stand at an elevated point, we should say that the benefit had almost indemnified society for the dreadful losses sustained in the process. If, as has been held by

distinguished economical philosophers, the average rate of wages is an exponent of national prosperity, the 'Trades' Unions which should effect this would be public benefactors. And it was in the expectation that the labourer by coping with his employers would in some degree effect this, that the British Parliament removed the restrictions from trade combinations. But to the astonishment of many, and the sorrow of all who know the facts, the chief effect of this repeal has been to increase the misery of the very class which it sought to benefit, by subjecting labouring-men to a despotism almost incredible in its power, and fruitless as to its grand intention.

How far does combination tend to produce a permanent elevation of wages? This is a proper question for seasons of tranquillity, such as the present. In the midst of a panic or a strike it would be vain to agitate it, because the present or proximate advantage—the rise of wages, however temporary—would dazzle the excited workman, and blind him to future evils. But in this time of contentment we ought to establish *principles*, which may stand us in stead when the struggle comes. Let us take a case in which the immediate effect of combination is that which was desired; and this is very common, where the strike has been well-timed, at seasons when great bills are running against employers, and where credit is low, and especially if the establishment is in some degree separate and single-handed.

Here the triumph of the working-man seems to common observers to be complete. But let us look a little deeper.

Take the case of journeymen tailors. Suppose this class of operatives, in Newark, to strike for higher wages, and to succeed. Journeymen tailors will be at once tempted to flow in from New York; and this influx will be in proportion, first, to the general distress, and, secondly, to the amount of increasing remuneration. Of course it will be less than it would be in the case of unskilled labour, such as that of the piecers and pickers in cotton factories; where the vacuum would be filled up almost immediately. The consequence of this transfer of labour is, that wages rise elsewhere, and by degrees fall here: after a short time the proportion is much what it had been, and the general rise of level is scarcely appreciable.

But put the case that all the journeymen tailors, throughout all the country, combine to raise the rate of wages. Here the transfer of labour is more slow, but not less certain. It is now a transfer, not from city to city, but from trade to trade. The man who is apprenticing his boy, chooses that trade whose wages are the highest: if the state of things continue, the current will change its bed, and find channels in new sorts of business. The case is extreme; one so favourable never occurs; as the struggle is commonly terminated long before any such result can be matured.

But imagine the case, that all the Unions, of all the trades thus combined in all the country, agree to force up the wages of labour. Unless they can simultaneously augment the productive power of the country, there is of necessity a fall in profits, or, in other words, a decrease in the accumulation of capital. Let us hear Dr. Vethake upon this point. "Every retardation of the rate in which capital accumulates will be accompanied by the two effects of a less rapid increase of population, and of a diminished rate of wages. Moreover, but for the enjoyment *for a time* by the labouring classes of a higher rate of wages, which will render them less disposed to content themselves with the wages they were before accustomed to, the diminution of wages will proceed until they are reduced once more to their former rate. The tendency of them, however, to be for this reason at a somewhat higher rate than formerly, would in all probability be more than counteracted by the sum total of production, when compared with the augmented population, having, from the necessity of applying capital and labour to the land under more disadvantageous circumstances than before, become diminished; a condition of things, it will be recollected, implying a rise of rents, and a fall of profits and *wages*." The same learned man guards us against the selfish rejoinder that this effect may not take place until years shall have passed away; by showing that *from the very moment* a rise of wages takes place, the rate of

profits will be reduced, capital accumulate slowly, and wages will fall. Besides this, the *real* wages of the working-man will not increase by any means as his *pecuniary* wages. He will find it harder to get work, and the commodities he needs will be higher in price.

The voice of political philosophy is therefore unequivocal. "*Even setting aside wholly* (says Dr. Vethake) *the permanently injurious effects to result*, I think that an unprejudiced person can scarcely avoid concluding against every system of the kind: not only in respect to the interests of the community regarded as a whole, but also in respect to those of the very parties to benefit whom is the object proposed."

XXI.

THE WORKING-MAN'S LIBERTIES.

“Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue, she alone is free.”

MILTON.

It would be much too trite to be welcome, if I were to say, that the tendency of things, in our free country, is towards licentiousness. But I shall account myself happy, if tumults, and revolts against equitable rule, do not drive some among us to ask for a strong government, as a resource against perpetual alarms. There is danger of this; and the way to counteract a disposition so unlike that in which we were all bred, and so inconsistent with the principles of our government, is certainly not unworthy of being searched for. In a knot of village politicians, whom I sometimes encounter of an evening, I listen with both ears to whatever may be said; and though I am without a tongue in such matters, I cannot help having an opinion. One thing is constantly showing itself, and I ask attention to my surmises. The red-hot Jacobins of our time are playing into the hands of the absolutists of Europe. While they try to set the poor against the rich—forgetting that he who is

poor to-day may be rich to-morrow ; while they dupe the unthinking with the old Agrarian song which befooled the Romans under the Gracchi, and the English mob under Jack Cade, and will never fail, till the world be wiser, to lift the demagogue another round of the ladder, and crush the poor fellows of whom he has made his stepping-stone ; while they teach that all rule is tyranny, and all subordination degrading, they are preparing the happiest consummation for the enemies of republican government. No union of foreign legitimists could break our bulwarks. All the power of Europe would only, like pressure on an arch, compact us more closely. Open assault, though gigantic and reiterated, would put us on our strong national points of resistance ; nor do I believe there is the power on earth which could force a king upon America. The blood of the old free colonists runs proudly yet. All fourth of July harangues to the contrary notwithstanding—we never were slaves ; we never can be—unless we sell ourselves.

I am alarmed to hear quiet men expressing themselves in new phrases ; as if our great experiment had almost failed. They have no reason to say so, except the rampant licentiousness and turbulent ferocity of certain agitators. But these occasional outbreaks tend to loosen our anchorage, to strain our holdfasts, and even when we wish to weigh and be off, the cables may part just when the anchors come a-peak. Principles are wearing

away silently but fast, in some very useful minds, which might be of great service to us at a pinch ; and this change is owing entirely to the revulsion caused by licentious temerity.

I am not one of those who dread so much from the *direct* influence of mobs and riots. There is, in the worst of them more show of teeth than bloodshed, more powder than ball ; thanks to Providence that it is so. More lives are lost in a dozen street-fights, or one steam-explosion, than in the riots of ten years. We are a strong people, and can resist a number of partial shocks, just as we resisted Shays' insurrection, and the Whisky Boys. Our Anglo-Saxon reserve holds off the supreme, ultimate force of repression as long as possible ; but it comes out at last, like Neptune, to still the waves. "A disorderly multitude," says Addison, in one of his works, which we have learned from British Tories to neglect,* "a disorderly multitude contending with the body of the legislature, is like a man in a fit under the conduct of one in the fulness of his health and strength. Such a one is sure to be overruled in a little time, though he deals about his blows, and exerts himself in the most furious convulsions while the distemper is upon him." But my apprehensions are of another sort. Our danger is from the disgust which is likely to arise in a large and influential portion of society, upon beholding the destructive efforts of ambitious or disaffected citizens. The

* The Freeholder, No. 28.

frame of our government, as left us by the heroic men who planned and established it, is the masterpiece of political architecture; it was often and justly compared to a Temple of Freedom. "But now," we may say with an ancient poet, "they break down the carved work thereof with axes and hammers." There is perhaps no man, of any trade, who does not think himself wise enough to tinker at a state constitution.

With the aid of my friend Mr. Appletree, the schoolmaster, and my favourite Plutarch, I could easily multiply instances of the dangers of licentiousness and excess among a free people. The ancient histories are full of this. So are the eventful stories of modern Italy. A volume might be filled with the turmoil of Florence alone. And all these examples go to show how important it is for our young men to set out in life with proper principles, and to maintain the golden mean betwixt Scylla and Charybdis. For there are two extremes. On the one side is the scented, girlish, long-haired fopling, fresh from Paris or London, who tries to acquire distinction by disparaging American institutions. Though his grandfather, perhaps, wrought with his own hands, the stripling looks on all republicanism as ungenteel. And on the other side is the braggart and ruffian, who would resign every question to the mob as the source of power, and have the country convulsed by annual popular elections of every functionary from a judge to a constable. "A usurping popu-

lace," said Swift, "is its own dupe, a mere under-worker, and a purchaser in trust for some simple tyrant, whose state and power they advance to their own ruin, with as blind an instinct as those worms that die with weaving magnificent habits for beings of a superior order. The people are more dexterous in pulling down and setting up, than at preserving what is fixed: and they are not fonder of seizing more than their own, than they are of delivering it up again to the worst bidder, with their own into the bargain."

The upshot of the matter is this: people should be taught from their cradles what true freedom is, and how it is to be maintained; how it differs from lawlessness and misrule, and how closely it is connected with popular virtue. The boy at school and in the shop should be taught, that nothing can be done without order; that there can be no order without law; that all law demands obedience; and that in such obedience to rightful authority, there is nothing which either injures or degrades. The apprentice and the journeyman should learn betimes, that to loosen a single pin of the social machine is like loosening the pin of a steam-engine; and wherever the disorganization may begin, it will never stop till it ruins those who have begun it. When public disorders, and civil broils, and revolutionary violence once enter, the very class of persons who always bear the worst of the tempest, is that for whose benefit I am writing—the honest, temperate, home-loving, industrious, frugal working-men.

XXII.

THE WORKING-MAN IN A STRANGE LAND.

“But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Lev. xix. 34.

ON a cold Saturday night, I stepped into a hatter's shop, in New York, to supply the loss of a beaver, which had been hopelessly injured in a crush at a public meeting. The gas-light before the door threw its gleam directly in the face of a young woman who was sitting near the counter. I perceived in a moment that she was thin, pale, and sorrowful. Her dark hair was ready to fall over her cheeks, as if she had forgotten to fasten it; her lips seemed to move; and the folds of a scanty black woollen shawl could not so far hide her hands but that I perceived she was wringing them. I remained some minutes in the shop, and, during that time, saw at least seven or eight young women and girls come into the place with work which they had been doing, after delivering which they received their payment. But still this sad creature kept her seat. At length the young man of the establishment said, in a tone somewhat

peevish, "Come, Jane—it is nearly ten o'clock—I am going to shut up—and you know you have been paid." She looked wildly up for a moment, and then dashed out of the house as if she had only then awaked from a stupor. "She is in a fair way to be crazy," said the young man.

"Ah!" rejoined I, much interested, "what has happened to her?" "Oh! I can scarcely tell you the whole," said he; "she is one of those confounded Irish—they all come to ruin." "I hope the girl is virtuous," said I. "Oh! virtuous enough, I warrant ye," cried he, with a vulgar addition, and a horse-laugh; "otherwise she would not be sewing fifteen hours a day on hat-linings. But then her father is sick in bed, her mother is just dead, the only brother she has is in jail for stealing a piece of domestic cotton, and there are three little sisters that have to be supported by this one. I happen to know all this; for her brother used to drive an omnibus in which I came down town every morning."

In reflecting on this ease, as I walked to my lodgings, I was oppressed with a recollection of the vulgar saying, that "one half the world does not know how the other half lives." How would it shock, even the most heartless, to have gathered before him, at a single glance, all the cases of this particular kind of misery, existing at this very moment in New York, or in Philadelphia. Alas! the stranger and foreigner finds many of his golden dreams untrue; and dies a thousand deaths. in

beholding the less rugged members of his family perish before him. Beauty, health, and innocence are too often the sacrifice, when a piercing and unexpected season of cold and poverty comes suddenly on a young creature in a strange country.

No man will have the hardihood to deny that we suffer serious inconveniences from the unlimited importation of foreigners. But every humane man will remember, that the day was when all the settlers of this country were emigrants; that his own ancestors came from abroad; that not all are ignorant, vicious, or uncivilized; and that even where vice has been the source of misery, such misery is not to be abandoned to despair and ruin.

It is the fashion to say much against the Irish as improvident, intemperate, and riotous; and no one can deny that some such charge is no more than fair against a large number; but it is a momentous question in morals, how far we are exempted from the duty of relieving the widow, the fatherless, the sick, or the aged, of any nation, because some, or even most, of the same lineage are vicious people. Some of the best blood in America is from Ireland. Some of the best citizens are the sons of Irishmen. Before we condemn, or spurn from our doors, the poor son of Erin, we are to remember that he flies to us from untold wrongs, and that he has heard of ours as the land of the oppressed. We need not go so far in our proscription as to denounce every creature that has

the brogue upon his tongue. I well remember having once stopped for a moment in Pine street, to look at a boy who had been thrown from a horse. Several men were around a pump at which they were washing the mire and blood from his face. "Who frightened the horse?" somebody inquired. "Oh," cried a bystander, "nobody can tell; but it was some —— Irishman, I'll bet." This was carrying out the native American policy, with a vengeance. The beauty of the thing was, that not ten rods off, in a door-way, stood the Rev. Mr. P., a genuine Irishman, with whom I was going to breakfast. He heard the critical portion of the speech, and sadly smiled. By-the-by, it would require the laborious charities of several common Americans towards the Irish, to repay the beneficence of this good clergyman among the sick poor of our own country. In conclusion, let me say, that I am neither an Irishman, nor the son of an Irishman.

XXIII.

ADVANTAGES OF AMERICAN WORKING-MEN.

“How small, of all that human hearts endure,
 That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!
 Still to ourselves in every place consign'd,
 Our own vicinity we make or find.”

The Traveller.

It is not uncommon to hear mechanics and other working-men repining at their lot in life, especially as compared with that of such as are engaged in the learned professions. In hours of despondency, those are imagined to be happy who are freed from the necessity of manual labour, whether as men of wealth or of letters. Contentment is the best policy. All is not gold that glitters. Inaction is not ease. Money will not purchase happiness. Lords and ladies are often very wretched people; and the instances are numerous in which even kings have thought men of humble stations the happiest.

M. d'Alembert relates that Frederick, king of Prussia, once said to him, as they were walking together in the gardens of Sans Souci, “Do you see that old woman, a poor weeder, asleep on that sunny bank? She is probably happier than either

of us." So also Henry IV. exclaims, in Shakspeare,

"Canst thou, O partial Sleep! give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;
And in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and aids to boot,
Deny it to a king?"

which may remind us of the saying of a greater and wiser king than either: "The sleep of a labouring-man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep."* And before I dismiss my royal witnesses, let me cite King James the First, of England, who used to say, that the happiest lot in life was that which set a man below the office of a justice of the peace, and above that of a petty constable.†

The truth is, labour is not an evil. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," sounds like a curse, but has been made a blessing by our benign Creator. Health, strength, and cheerfulness are promoted by the proper use of our bodily powers. Among the Jews, labour was accounted so honourable and so necessary, that every man used to be bred to some trade; that so he might have a resource in case of misfortune. The same sentiment has prevailed in other eastern nations. One of the Hebrew Rabbies has the surname of

* Eccles. v. 12.

† Life of Philip Henry, p. 25.

the Shoemaker, and another of the Baker. Sir Paul Ricaut somewhere mentions, that the Grand Seignior, to whom he was ambassador, had been taught to make wooden spoons. There cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose that mental exertion is less wearing than the labour of the hands. Head work is the hardest work in the world. The artisan feels this if at any time he has to spend a whole day in calculation. All men of learning testify to the same truth, and their meager frames and sallow complexions tell a plainer tale than their words. Sir Edward Coke, the great English lawyer, speaks thus concerning his great work: "Whilst we were in hand with these four parts of the Institutes, we often having occasion to go into the country, did in some sort envy the state of the honest ploughman and other mechanics. For one, when he was at his work, would merrily sing, and the ploughman whistle some self-pleasing tune, and yet their work both proceeded and succeeded; but he that takes upon him to write, doth captivate all the faculties and powers, both of his mind and body, and must be only attentive to that which he collecteth, without any expression of joy or cheerfulness while he is at his work."

But if it is true of working-men everywhere that as such their lot is not to be deplored, it is eminently true of working-men in America, as compared with those of other countries. It is important that information on this subject should

be diffused among the industrious classes, in order to show them how unreasonable are their murmurs. Take the case of the common labourer; he is better clothed, better lodged, and better fed, in America, than in any country on earth. Two-thirds of the French people, says M. Dupin, are at this day wholly deprived of the nourishment of animal food, and they live on chestnuts, Indian corn, or potatoes. In parts of Normandy, the lace-makers take refuge in the cow-houses, where the breath of the cattle diffuses some warmth: here they do the whole of their work during the cold season. Even in England, many of the hand-loom workers receive but seven shillings a week, and live in damp hovels, almost without furniture. I need not say how different is the case of the poorest labourer among ourselves; while the condition of the thriving mechanic is, in comparison, almost princely. Mr. Grund, an intelligent foreigner, says, on this point, "On entering the house of a respectable mechanic in any of the large cities of the United States, one cannot but be astonished at the apparent neatness and comfort of the apartments, the large airy parlours, the nice carpets and mahogany furniture, and the tolerably good library, showing the inmates' acquaintance with the standard works of English literature. The labouring classes in America are really less removed from the wealthy merchants and professional men than they are in any part of Europe."

The American mechanic has the prospect of

wealth spread before him ; and as he advances towards it, his leisure increases with his means. He has an opportunity to lay in stores of knowledge. If he has attended somewhat to learning in his younger days, he finds no obstacle now in the way of his advancement either in science or literature. With a moderate income, and a favourable situation, he can give his sons and daughters a far better education than he received himself. And if he is so happy as to be a member of any Christian church, he finds that there is no privilege, trust, or office from which he is excluded by his having been a labouring-man. Thus he mingles with the choicest portions of society ; and if he live to old age, enjoys the grateful repose of that season as fully as the proudest descendant from nobles. Is there any country but our own, where all this can be said with truth ?

Go into any of the American towns and large villages, and you will find mechanics occupying some of the most elegant mansions ; you will see them filling the highest municipal stations. You will recognise them in large proportion among the officers of the militia, in the direction of moneyed corporations, and upon the most improved farms. You will find their names in every ecclesiastical record, and high in the list of benefactors in every charity. Such are the signs which should satisfy every American working-man, that by choosing a laborious calling, he has not excluded himself from comfort, usefulness, or honour.

XXIV.

THE VILLAGE TALKER.

“Talkers are no good doers.”

King Richard III.

AFTER the lapse of twenty odd years, I have full in my mind's eye the person of Sandy Thorp. He was a grown man, while I was still a child, yet a large portion of his life passed within my knowledge; which will be the more credible when I say that the better portion of his days was passed in the street. Not that he did not sometimes, nay, often, drop into the door of a tavern; for he knew everybody; but this was only the brief exception, like the alighting of the swallow. It might be said that Sandy was always on the wing. Not even Socrates was less fond of the country than Sandy Thorp, who, like the same great sage, was almost perpetually engaged in discourse by the wayside. At whatever hour you might choose to go down town, you would be sure to see Sandy, whatever else you might miss. In the early summer morning he would be loitering around the stage-office to get a glimpse of the passengers who had lodged for the night; perhaps to snatch up a grain of news. When the tavern boarders

were picking their teeth on the porch after breakfast, Sandy picked his teeth under the same auspices. The opening of our little post-office usually gathered a group, of whom he was always one. As the sun came out hotter and hotter, he would retreat from the open ways, to some shed or awning, or saunter from shop to shop, always on his feet, and evidently preferring the outside to the inside of the door. At that still hour of the afternoon, when the Spaniard takes his siesta, when ladies are invisible, and when every thing seems to be dead, Sandy was as brisk as the bee that hummed over his head; for wherever a listener could be found he was haranguing, with rapid puffs from the short pipe which he employed to keep down his nervous agitation. The night did not close his activity, and I have often heard his voice, long before I could discern his form, among the worthies who make this the favourite season of their promenade.

Perhaps I am drawing a picture which will be recognised in more towns than one. Certain I am there can be no mistake in that in which I write. Though Sandy is long since dead, the race is not extinct. That which characterized him was his ubiquity and his news-mongering. It was his pride to be at the first of every rumour. You could not tell him any thing new, or make him wonder at any thing unheard of: as he would not be instructed, the marvel was how he ever came to the knowledge of his facts. Only two

explanations have ever been attempted; one was that he never so much heard as overheard; though not a willing listener, he was an eavesdropper: and while he hung upon the outskirts of a gathering of men, he would carry away more of the conversation than any one of the company. Another account was that many of the incidents which he related were of his own manufacture.

No occurrence ever mortified him more, than when Gleig, the Scotch stone-cutter, his next door neighbour, absconded during the night, leaving Sandy in the vocative with regard to the rent of a little yard in which he worked at his tomb-stone. He could not pretend that it had been done with his privity, because he had been cozened: he would not confess ignorance, because he would thus lose the chief plume in his cap. For several days he was missing from the village, and always spoke of the event as very mysterious.

It is remarkable that in almost every place, there are some men who seem to have no means of support, and who live along for years together, without suspicion of actual dishonesty, and without falling into the clutches of the law. If Sandy Thorp ever had a trade, nobody could tell what it was. He owned a little shop separate from his house, but no work was ever done in it, and when any one was allowed to peep into it there seemed to be nothing in it but old iron, scattered tools, and refuse furniture and harness. In earlier life Sandy picked up a dollar now and then, by going

to the beach for a wagon load of fish, or by filling an ice-house, or in the spring of the year by bringing in choice forest trees for planting in pleasure-grounds. But his main employment was that of a veterinary surgeon, or, more vulgarly, a horse doctor. Whether this science comes by inspiration, or whether he was a seventh son, I know not, but he took it up, as most do, without any regular diploma. Like all loungers about tavern-doors, he was much engaged in passing judgment on all the horses of the neighbourhood. You might see him, almost daily, feeling the legs, or prying into the mouths of the hacks in the stable-yard: and, let me not fail to say, it is an employment in which he has not left us without successors. I distinctly remember the air with which he would handle a fleam, or perform the operation of mashing upon a choked cow. Such performances are sure to collect a little knot of men, and this was just what Sandy gloried in. Here he could repeat the freshest news, and give his decision upon affairs of state with an air of judicial complacency.

Sandy was little versed in books. He always knew, however, what sign the sun was in, and whether the heavens were favourable for planting, or for killing porkers. He was weather-wise, keeping the breast-bone of a goose, by way of teraphim. No one ever saw him in church, except at funerals, on which occasion he was in some sort a brevet undertaker; he would point

out the way for the bearers, and determined whether the grave was wide enough. At vendues, he was scarcely ever known to bid, but he advised in a knowing way. Of money he had little concern; the instinct of beggars always led them to pass him by. By long continued street-walking, he had reduced his frame to a wiry fibre; and as he was tall, erect, and always thinly clad, his appearance was striking. I ought to add that he was never shabby. His apparel though very old was always in repair, the patches and darns being done with a neatness which made some suspect he had been a tailor. It was observed that when he had worn a hat for several years, and exhausted the powers of brushing and ironing, he used to put crape upon it: in such cases, it always happened, that he had recently lost a cousin in the "Lake country." As long as he had hair, he powdered it; then he used to powder his bare crown, until this genteel appliance became obsolete. There was always, on the cuff of his left sleeve, a row of pins, inserted with geometrical parallelism. When he talked, he was in the habit of whittling a stick, so that his track was often marked by little piles of shavings. His likeness was never taken, nor could it have been; for when he was not talking, he did not look like himself.

XXV.

PLEASURES OF THE TABLE.

“Alas! how simple, to these cates compared,
Was that crude apple that diverted Eve.”

MILTON.

IT is the grand endeavour of all philosophy and all religion to elevate the immortal part of man; to subdue and regulate that which he has in common with the brute, and thus to refine and expand his nature. But there is a latent sensuality in our race which is perpetually thwarting this pious effort; and as there are no men without appetites, and few men without lusts, he who flatters that within us which is animal, gains a willing votary, and often beguiles us in spite of our reason. The fine arts, occupying a field intermediate between the region of sense and that of intellect, have on this very account been often prostituted. Painting, sculpture, and especially music, have pandered to the unworthy principle, and poetry and other kindred parts of literature have been made to do homage to sense. All this shows a sad inversion of human nature. It is not that we have senses, that we have appetites, that we have desires, that we have passions, but it is

that we serve them, that we are betrayed by them, that they become our idols. Eden, the dwelling of pure heaven-like creatures, was a garden of sense; its fruits were material, its sights and sounds addressed bodily organs; its paths were trodden by creatures of flesh and blood. Let us not curse the harmless matter, or the indifferent sense; but let us fear their abuse, in the present decrepit condition of humanity.

Drunkenness has had its poetry. Nay, start not—some of the most stirring effusions of the age have been written by men whose “fine frenzy” was a sort of Dutch courage: Byron declared the true Hippocrene to be gin and water. The festivities of the table have been accompanied with music and song, in all ages. Now I plead for the festivities, in every virtuous sense, and I plead for the song; but in the name of injured human nature I cry out against the intoxication. Look back to early ages, and you see Bacchus presiding over the poets. Anacreon was the darling glee-maker for the old wine-bibbers. Horace was little behind him among the Romans. In our day half the ballads remaining in our own language turn upon drinking and drunkenness; and many a noble traditionary air is linked to the devil’s own litany, as in *Cauld Kale in Aberdeen*:

“For I maun hae my cogie, sirs,

I canna want my cogie;

I wadna gie my three-girr’d cog

For a’ the queans in Bogie.”

In adapting new words to the Scots' old melodies, it was scarcely to be expected that Robert Burns would so far preach above his practice as to sing of cold water; and some of Tom Moore's most brilliant melodies have almost the scent of champagne. All seem to have thought with the Roman, that a water-drinker could not be a poet.

In other branches of elegant letters, men who should have felt the high calling to be the ministers of moderation and virtue, have in certain instances, even when they have not inculcated indulgence, spread the sensual table with such seductive sweets and garlands, as to wake the tendencies which they should have lulled. It would be hard to throw a glory around the extreme of inebriety: the incongruity of Christopher Sly in the bed of silk would startle one into ridicule. The poet's wreath cannot be conveniently placed on him who is dead drunk. But to this last depth men are conducted through divers descents and landing-places; and of those some which are near the surface, fall within the circle of flowers and breezes, the poet's-land. Thus the wine-cup and the lyre have lain side by side for ages; but an evil demon has maintained the connexion; and I would to God that at once and forever American youth might dissever in their thoughts all that is ingenuous and joyful from the paroxysms of vinous inspiration.

Drinking, as a mere bodily act, is not more dignified than eating: yet we have no eating-

songs. Though great events, such as a successful election, are solemnized by a dinner or a supper, yet some veil is thrown over the deglutition. We drink sentiments; we never eat them. In advertisements precedent, and narratives subsequent, the orators and singers at these banquets are never presented to the reader's imagination as pouring out eloquence or song through the interstices of venison or oysters, but over bumpers of costly wine. Yet both go to the same place; and the whole artifice is one of the tricks we put upon ourselves. Conscious that our souls are affronted by this prominency given to animal indulgence, we use all the poor means in our power to array these gross delights in the vesture of tasteful spirituality. Disguise the matter as we may, ornament as we may the table or the cup, it is of the earth, earthy. The soul spurns it. We do but fill and feed that which is presently to be a corpse and putrefaction. Do I cry out against this? Not by any means; but I speak, for the soul, against the homage we are so busily paying to the body. God has graciously made our meat and our drink delightful; but it is we, who, like the Egyptians with their goat and their onion, have made them gods. We must fight against this usurpation. We must from our infancy keep under the body. He who would be a man, must treat his lower nature as a gigantic slave, who is always watching his chance to rise and be uppermost.

• There are some who pride themselves upon withholding from their lips every thing which can intoxicate, while they indulge in all other pleasures of the table *ad libitum*. This is a great mockery. The soul may be crushed with a load, as well as drowned with a flood. We have the statistics of the disease and death caused by drinking, but who will furnish that caused by eating? So far as the overt act is concerned, the latter is certainly the more brutal. As a conclusion to my outcry against animalism, I will state a case, which may serve to show that there is a nearer analogy than is usually suspected between the two sorts of excess; and which may further afford an exercise for the pens of certain modern authors who are fond of describing with Apician gusto the progress of a feast. True, the sketch I shall offer relates to the Esquimaux; but still it will, for that very reason, best serve my purpose of exhibiting, without a mask, the devotee of sense; and I would not quote it, if it were less disgusting. “We found,” says Capt. Lyon, in the account of his northern adventures, “that the party which had been adrift had killed two large walruses, which they had carried home during the early part of the night. No one therefore came to the ships, all remaining in the huts to gormandize. We found the men lying under their deer-skins, and clouds of steam rising from their naked bodies. From Kooilittuk I learned a new Esquimaux luxury; *he had eaten until he was drunk*, and every mo-

ment fell asleep with a flushed and burning face, and his mouth open. By his side sat Arnalooa, who was attending her cooking-pot, and at short intervals awakened her spouse, in order to cram as much as was possible of a large piece of half-boiled flesh into his mouth, with the assistance of her forefinger, and having filled it quite full, cut off the morsel close to his lips. This he slowly chewed, and as soon as a small vacancy became perceptible, this was filled by a lump of raw blubber. During this operation the happy man moved no part of him but his jaws, not even opening his eyes; but his extreme satisfaction was occasionally shown by a most expressive grunt, whenever he enjoyed sufficient room for the passage of sound. The drippings of the savoury repast had so plentifully covered his face and neck, that I had no hesitation in determining that a man may look more like a beast by over-eating than by drinking to excess.”*

* Capt. Lyon's Private Journal, p. 182.

XXVI.

DRINKING AND DRUNKENNESS.

“O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee—devil.” *Othello.*

IF an insane parent should be brought to the diabolical resolution of burning a child to death, it would not be necessary that he should violently thrust the infant into the flames. Only remove from the little creature all dread of the fire, give him free access within the fender to the blazing billets, and no long time would elapse before the ruin would be consummated. And precisely so, in regard to death and destruction by strong drink. The parent need not drench his son with a mortal dose of alcohol; nay, he need not force him to be even once drunk. All that is necessary is that he should bring him up to absolute carelessness as to the danger of strong drink, allow him license in tasting it, and set him the example of indulgence. Alas! for one that is literally burned alive, there are a hundred destroyed by the liquid fire.

I should not deem myself pardonable, if I were to omit this topic in addressing young men, especially those of the industrious class; and although some of the crusades in favour of the virtue of

temperance have been conducted with fanatical heats, and a contempt for all evidence and every rule of reasoning, I cannot think that any friend of his race is thereby excused from the duty of employing every means to secure our rising population from so intense a curse as that of drunkenness. And when I speak of drunkenness, my metaphysics will not help me to take a distinction between getting drunk on gin and getting drunk on cider. In the present state of the vintner's business, the difference between a brandy-sot and a wine-sot, is just this; the one drinks brandy and water; the other drinks brandy and wine. It is *drunkenness*, and its provocatives, against which I would raise the alarm. The direct and undeniable arguments against this vice are so numerous and overwhelming, that I feel no necessity for rushing into the ludicrous paradoxes, exaggerated statistics, and profane wresting of holy writ, which have become a part of the regular agitation in this matter. Therefore I have never sought to prove that the wine of the Scriptures was not inebriating, or that alcohol, in its smallest portion, is concrete iniquity. But with the incontrovertible reasons occurring in every day's walk, I would urge on my young countrymen to abhor the cup of temptation. The sight of one slavering drunkard is enough; it contains an encyclopedia of arguments against any indulgence in strong liquors. I am amazed that, as one man, our youth do not arise in their strength, and swear to exter-

minate this dragon. I am amazed that a single young man, so long as there remains a drunkard in the land, should hesitate to save himself from the reach of the monster's fang. And most of all am I amazed that there should be a single being, not confessedly a coward and hypocrite, who can be deterred by the sneers of corrupt comrades from adopting a line of conduct which his reason and his conscience imperatively prescribe.

If we can raise up a generation of sturdy fellows who have never tasted the evil spirit, we shall insure to the country, at a later day, a tribe of hale aged men, every one of whom may say with old Adam—

“Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty :
 For in my youth I never did apply
 Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood ;
 Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
 The means of weakness and debility ;
 Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
 Frosty but kindly.”*

And our descendants will look back on the annals of intoxication with as much incredulity or detestation, as that with which we ourselves contemplate the gladiatorial shows, or the orgies of the cannibal.

The attraction which has brought me to this subject is certainly not its novelty, but its importance ; and I must even run the risk of repeating

* As You Like It.

things which have been uttered at a hundred Temperance meetings ; these pages may, however, be read by some who do not frequent such assemblies. To the young man whose eye is upon this page, I would therefore say, do for yourself what the Spartans used to do for their children ; summon before you some beastly impersonation of the vice, in order that it may forever seize your imagination and your heart. Call before your mind's eye a group of the worst drunkards within your knowledge. Fancy the whole dozen to be before you—as, for instance, on the bench or settee of some gin or beer shop. Behold the maudlin tears, the drivel, the lack-lustre eye, the hiccough, the belch, the vomit, (shame on vice which makes indecency indispensable to truth,) the stagger, the stammer, the idiotism ! Behold decrepitude in youth, and contempt in hoary hairs ! Add to the scene the wives they have murdered, and the sons who have died of drink before their eyes—and then—while your “gorge rises” at the spectacle,—fix in your soul this one truth—*There is not one of these demoniacs who was not once as pure and as fearless as yourself.*

There is something so nauseous in the extreme symptoms of this disease, that it might be proper to cast a veil over them, if it were not that Providence has made them odious in order to alarm our fears. We ought therefore to take a fair look upon the stagnant pool of abominations in which those wallow who tamper with this indulgence. In the

approach, Intemperance shows a gay and pleasing face : her complexion is ruddy, her wreathed smiles are soft and melting ; she sings and dances, as she offers “ the sweet poison of misused wine.” She leads the social bevy, and steals the mask of friendship, of liberality, and of patriotism. She proffers her assistance at every festival. It is this aspect of the Circe which allures and misleads. It is only after the seduction has been completed—after the curtain has been dropped—in the recesses of her private chamber, that the horrid truth is displayed. There it is the victim finds that her eye is a red fountain of rheums, her breath putrescence, her visage livid and bloated, her tongue ribald, and her frame a mass of ulcerous corruption.

Faugh ! “ Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination !” You may well exclaim thus ; but the more you are disgusted, the more just is your impression ; and the vile emblem is faint when placed by the viler reality. Seeing then that the cup of wine leads to such issues, and that the merely temporal results of drinking are thus loathsome, let me beg you to abjure all those sportive and therefore palliative expressions which are often employed to describe a condition which is in wretchedness and degradation below nothing on this side of hell. We have many merry tropes by which to point out that a man has made himself a fool or a maniac. The Arabs are said to have near a hundred names for a lion. We have almost as many for a man in

liquor. But in proportion as we laugh, we fail to abhor. The boy who jeers a street-drunkard, has his natural horror merged in a mere sense of the ludicrous. Let this be examined, and it will, if I err not, lead to a principle which has been too much neglected. *Abandon at once and for life the use as a beverage, either habitually or occasionally, of every liquid which can intoxicate.* With a soul filled with detestation of this chief of the Furies, free yourself from her solicitations.

XXVII.

THE WORKING-MAN'S HEALTH.

“Know, then, whatever cheerful and serene
 Supports the mind, supports the body too.
 Our greatest good, and what we least can spare,
 Is Hope: the last of all our evils, Fear.”

ARMSTRONG.

IN a late visit I had the pleasure of meeting my two good friends, uncle Benjamin and the schoolmaster, quietly seated under the shade of a spreading buttonwood tree. Upon my making some little complaints about my ill health, uncle Benjamin interrupted me with “Pshaw! man! beware of becoming a grumbler. I have known a man whose everlasting reply was *Dying*, while he ate well, slept well, and looked as if he could have knocked down a beef.”

“Some men,” said the schoolmaster, quoting Cowper,—

“Some men employ their health, an ugly trick,
 In making known how oft they have been sick,
 And give us, in recitals of disease,
 A doctor's trouble, but without the fees;
 Relate how many weeks they kept their bed,
 How an emetic or cathartic sped;
 Nothing is slightly touch'd, much less forgot,
 Nose, ears, and eyes seem present on the spot.”

“Just so,” rejoined uncle Benjamin: “ailing folks should live in hospitals; at any rate they should remember that other people are not so deeply interested in their disorders. In a long life I have always observed, that there is no greater difference between an ill-bred and a well-bred man, than that the latter keeps his little troubles to himself. It is a shame for active mechanics to become complainers; even if they are amiss, brooding only makes matters worse. What says the proverb? the three best doctors are Dr. Diet, Dr. Quiet, and Dr. Merryman. What says the Bible? *A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.*”*

“That reminds me,” said Appletree, “of what is said of the famous Dr. Nichols, that whatever a man’s distemper might be, he would not attend him, as a physician, if his mind was not at ease; for he believed that no medicines would have any influence. And I dare say you have read the twenty-fifth number of the Spectator, where Addison says, ‘the fear of death often proves mortal,’ and that many more thousands are killed in a flight than in a battle, and that it is impossible that we should take delight in any thing that we are every moment afraid of losing.”

“There is too much talk,” said uncle Benjamin, “about health as a separate concern. If men are temperate, regular, active, cheerful, and cleanly, they will generally be well. If not, let them bewail their mishaps, not before their friends, but

* Prov. xvii. 22.

their doctor. But what with bran-bread and vegetable diet, and what with lectures and tracts upon health, hundreds are put in the way of becoming symptom-hunters, then hypochondriacs, and then real invalids. None but a fool will go to fingering the nice works of a watch; yet any one feels free to tinker with his constitution. First whims, then experiments, ruin the strength."

"Even learned men," said the schoolmaster, "have fallen victims to this folly. Dr. Stark, an eminent physician of the last century, experimented on diet until his life ended in February, 1770. On the 24th of the preceding June he began with bread and water. On the 26th of July he changed this for bread, water, and sugar. Then came bread, water, and olive oil. On the 8th of September he was so weak that he almost fainted in walking across the room. The last mess but one was a diet of bread or flour with honey, and an infusion of tea or of rosemary. He died on the 23d of February. Bathing, which is one of the best things in the world, may be carried to excess. Men of one idea are fond of recommending their own notions to every one: but Dr. Currie closes the account of one of his experiments in cold bathing with the remark, that the chief thing he learned from it was, that it was not rashly to be repeated."

"Right, right," exclaimed uncle Benjamin; "'God never made his work for man to mend.' The really robust and long-lived men in all nations

have always been those who have had no whimsies. They have been temperate, and cleanly, and good-natured, and brisk, but they have kept no lenten days, nor proscribed any of the ordinary articles of diet. Good roast beef, with tea, coffee, and garden stuffs, has not shortened their days.* And I believe after all it is quantity rather than quality which hurts us. Let a man be forever asking himself, Will this hurt? or, Will that hurt? and he will soon arrive at the point at which every thing will hurt."

"Exactly so," said the schoolmaster. "When Dr. Johnson's friend Taylor happened to say that he was afraid of emetics, for fear of breaking some small vessels, 'Poh!' said Johnson, 'if you have so many things that will break, you had better break your neck at once, and there's an end on't. You will break no small vessels!' And then, says Boswell, he puffed and blowed with high derision."

The real diseases of working-men deserve to be considered with all possible aid from science. Let their causes and frequency be noted and re-

* "Mr. Wesley," says Dr. Southey, "believed that the use of tea made his hand shake so before he was twenty years old, that he could hardly write. He published an essay against tea-drinking, and left off during twelve years: then, 'at the close of a consumption,' by Dr. Fothergill's directions, he used it again, and probably learned how much he had been mistaken in attributing ill effects to so refreshing and innocent a beverage."

ported. Where prevention is possible, let them be prevented; where cure is possible, let them be cured; but let them not weigh like a nightmare on those who are well. The statistics of disease in England go to show that "one hundred of the efficient male population of the country are not liable to more than twenty-five severe attacks of disease in the year. Each man is liable to a protracted disease, disabling him from work, every four years: this forms one great section of the sickness of the country, but it does not include accidents from fighting and drunkenness, or the many ailments which make men apply for medical advice while they carry on their occupation, comprising, perhaps, as many more cases of a slighter character, which raise to fifty per cent. the proportion of the population attacked annually."*

Some of our working-men of the active trades lose their health by over-eating and over-working: of course I leave out the drinking men, who can seldom have sound insides. Extreme exertion wears out multitudes in all trades where great bodily power is required. The coal-heavers of London, healthy as they look, are but a short-lived people. The heavy loads which they carry and the liquor which they drink carry them off rapidly. Before the introduction of the power-press, a large proportion of the pressmen who

* Statistical Account of the British Empire; Article by Dr. Farr.

were accustomed to print large newspapers, by hand, were affected with a particular disease, which is the result of an unequal action on the muscles. In the sedentary trades, the danger is from constrained position, bad air, want of exercise, and want of water. An hour every day in the garden or wood-yard, and a daily sponging of the whole body, together with temperance, cheerful evening visits, and good music, would put blood into the veins of many a limber tailor and swarthy shoemaker.

XXVIII.

BATHS, AND CLEANLINESS.

“’Tis this adorns the rich ;
The want of this is poverty’s worst wo ;
With this external virtue, age maintains
A decent grace ; without it, youth and charms
Are loathsome.”

ARMSTRONG

THERE is nothing in which the domestic economy of the moderns, more differs from that of the ancients, than in the article of Baths. The allusions of the Bible to this practice are familiar to us all. The Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans agreed in making it a part of their daily routine. The public baths of the Romans were magnificent structures. Those of Caracalla were adorned with two hundred pillars, and furnished with sixteen hundred seats of marble ; on which three thousand persons could be accommodated at once. Those of Dioclesian were still more sumptuous. Alexander Severus, to gratify the passion for bathing, ordered the warm baths to be opened by break of day, and also supplied the lamps with oil. Thus the bath became a universal luxury, until there were some so devoted to the enjoyment as to use it four, five, and even eight times a day.

In modern Europe, though bathing is not so highly prized as it was among the ancients, it is regarded as far more necessary to health and comfort than among ourselves. Indeed the neglect of thorough ablution is not unlikely to become a national reproach. A British traveller says, and not without some appearance of truth, that "the practice of travellers' washing at the door or in the porticoes, or at the wells of taverns and hotels, once a day, is most prejudicial to health; the ablution of the body, which ought never to be neglected, *at least twice a day*, in a hot climate, being altogether inconsistent with it. In fact," he adds, "I have found it more difficult, in travelling in the United States, to procure a liberal supply of water at all times of the day and night in my bedchamber than to obtain any other necessary. A supply for washing the hands and face once a day seems all that is thought requisite."* Though the traveller's censure applies with its full force to some parts of his own country, we may take a useful hint, and amend our ways.

The two great considerations which recommend the bath are its influence, first, on cleanliness, and, next, on health; and the latter is in a great degree dependent on the former. "Cleanliness," as John Wesley is reported to have said, "is the next thing to godliness;" and such is the connexion between outward and inward purity, that, in all

* Stuart's *Three Years in America*, vol. ii. p. 440.

religions, the one has been the symbol of the other. Of course, those who work hard and perspire copiously, have more need of care in this particular than others. To the artisan, therefore, the bath is a double advantage, a double luxury. All trades, however, are not alike. There are some in which the operative cannot pretend to be clean, while he is actually employed; to attempt it would be affectation; but there is the more reason why he should enjoy the feeling of perfect cleanliness when work is over. The watchmaker or the trimmer may be almost as neat as a lady; but there are none who are entirely exempt from the need of water. Some there are who are scarcely aware of the extent to which their skin has become clogged by the successive perspirations and depositions of years. They might form some idea of the fact if they should scrape the surface with a dull knife, by which the accumulated outer skin would come off in a scurf of branny powder. It is too common with certain persons, to wash only for the public, and to cleanse only what is visible.

If we were brought up in proper notions on this subject, and knew when we were comfortable, we should feel as much necessity for water to our bodies as to our faces; and a bathing-house, or at least a bathing-tub, would be as indispensable as a wash-basin. An eminent German physician, Hufeland, tells us, that "every Sunday evening people formerly went in procession through the

streets, beating on basins, to remind the labourers of bathing; and the tradesman, who laboured at dirty work, washed off, in the bath, that dirt, which now adheres to him during a long life." Only he who has made the experiment can know how delicious is the feeling produced by a thorough warm ablution, after a day of heat and exertion. "To wash one's self," says one of our own eminent medical authorities, "ought to have a much more extended meaning than people generally attach to the words. It should not consist merely in washing the hands, and rubbing a wet towel over the face, and sometimes the neck; the ablution ought to extend over the entire surface, and it is particularly necessary where often least thought of, as at the bends of the limbs, &c. In a tepid bath, with the aid of a little soap and a sponge, or brush, the process may be completely performed—with a feeling of comfort at the moment, and of much pleasure afterwards."*

If bathing affords so much comfort, it conduces not less to health. No man can be in health whose skin is out of order. This is beginning to be acknowledged by all who think and write upon the human system. It is the skin which is the seat of perspiration, of which about thirty-three ounces pass through every twenty-four hours; even when there is no visible moisture

* Dr. John Bell, on Baths and Mineral Waters; a learned and judicious work, to which I am indebted for most that is valuable in this essay.

on the surface. The skin is the regulator of animal heat; it is a great absorbent, and takes in again much of the corrupt matter left in contact with it by want of cleanliness. It is in close connexion with almost every important function of the system. A glance at these facts will show that it requires daily attention. But some will be surprised to learn further, that this wonderful covering has other no less important offices. It not only lets out liquid, but it takes in airs, as well as watery vapour: so that it may almost be said to play the part of the lungs, by secreting and absorbing the same gases. In some animals, indeed, as in the leech, all the breathing is done by the skin, and you may kill a frog as effectually by varnishing him all over, as by tearing out his lungs. The filthy covering of an unwashed person is not unlike such a varnish, and he who never bathes labours under a sort of half-suffocation. The outer scurf which we may scrape away is a deposition from the true or inner skin. A good washing and rubbing softens this outer skin, and makes it easy to rub off the dead parts with a brush or hard towel. In this respect, all baths, of whatever temperature, are useful. The surface is cleansed and freed from obstructions, and a way is cleared for the passage of the proper fluids and gases. On a subject so important, I trust these little details will not be thought either dry or unnecessary.

The cold bath is the most natural, and the most

easily taken, but it is not always proper or safe. There are some I know who recommend it indiscriminately to all persons, at all seasons; but such is not the counsel of wise physicians. "In proportion," says Dr. Combe, "as cold bathing is influential in the restoration of health when judiciously used, it is hurtful when resorted to without discrimination." "Many persons," says Dr. Bell, "in even vigorous health, cannot tolerate the cold bath for the shortest period, still less can they habitually use it with benefit. Even they who have accustomed themselves to it are in danger from the practice, if it be continued after any sudden diminution of vital energy, by whatever cause produced." The same learned author rejects the vulgar notion that cold bathing is either a tonic or a stimulant, and teaches us, that what some are pleased to consider a *reaction* after the application of cold, is no such thing, and that the skin is not actually warmer at this time than before. He therefore comes to the same conclusion with the great ancient Galen, that the cold bath is proper for persons in perfect health, and for fleshy ones, for the temperate and those who use due exercise; that the proper season for it is summer, and that one must be gradually accustomed to it. But neither he nor the most timid adviser would debar the manly swimmer from plunging into the stream, or still better from indulging in that exquisite refreshment, the dash of the surf upon the sea-shore.

Both the eminent physicians whom I have quoted recommend for habitual use the tepid or warm bath. A temperature ranging from 85° to 98° is named by Dr. Combe. The best rule is to avoid the positive impressions, either of heat or cold. The effect is at once tranquillizing and invigorating, in a high degree. Nothing can savour more of ignorance, or be less agreeable to experience, than the notion of some, that the warm bath is enfeebling. From the earliest ages it has been the restorative of the exhausted traveller, and the writer of these lines can never forget its magical effect after a wearisome journey of some hundreds of miles. Darwin reminds us, that the words *relaxing* and *bracing*, which are generally used in relation to warm and cold baths, are mechanical terms, properly applied to drums or strings; but are only metaphors, when applied to this subject. After a long day's work the warm bath is a thousand-fold better than strong liquors. Bruce, in his travels in Abyssinia, tells us, that when he felt an intolerable inward heat, and was so exhausted as to be ready to faint, he was made as fresh and strong by a warm bath, as on his rising in the morning. "Some persons may tell me," says he, "that the heat of the bath must weaken and enervate, but I can assure them that the reverse is the case." Our celebrated countryman, Count Rumford, once repaired to Harrowgate, in a feeble state of health. Such was his fear of taking cold from the warm bath, that he used it only once in

three days, for less than fifteen minutes, and always went from it to a warm bed. Finding this unprofitable, he reversed his method, and bathed every day, at two o'clock, for half an hour, at 96° and 97° of Fahrenheit, for thirty-five days together. "The salutary effects of this experiment," he adds, "were perfectly evident to all those who were present, and saw the progress of it; and the advantages I received from it have been permanent. The good state of health which I have since enjoyed, I attribute to it entirely." The same philosopher exposes the mistake of those who avoid the warm bath for fear of catching cold; as, indeed, one has no more occasion to dread catching cold after having been in a warm bath, than from going out of doors into the air of a frosty morning. "There are few," says Dr. Combe, "who do not derive evident advantage from the regular use of the tepid bath, and still fewer who are hurt by it."

It is one of the great advantages of a residence in the city of Philadelphia, that there is not only an abundant supply of water, but that all the better class of houses are provided with bathing-rooms, in which either cold or warm baths may be taken. And even those who are without these conveniences, may have easy access to public baths. Or, in the worst imaginable case, a tub of warm water, a piece of soap, a sponge, and a hard towel may be found in the house of any man who wishes to cleanse his person.

XXIX.

INTEMPERANCE AND DISEASE.

“ Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
 I would not taste thy treasonous offer ; none
 But such as are good men can give good things,
 And that which is not good, is not delicious
 To a well-governed and wise appetite.”

MILTON.

IN looking over a book upon the effects of different trades upon health and long life,* I was struck with the repeated statement that such and such occupations would be less unhealthy, if it were not for the liquor drunk by the workmen. This, thought I, is very unfair : why blame the trade, when the fault all lies in the drink ? We may lay it down as a principle, that of honest employments, there is not one in fifty which is hurtful to the health of a temperate and prudent man ; but if men will still be mad enough to guzzle beer or whisky, they may destroy them-

* The Effects of the Principal Arts, Trades, and Professions, and of civic states and habits of living, on Health and Longevity : &c. &c. by C. Turner Thackrah. Philadelphia, 1831.

selves amidst the most wholesome circumstances in the world.

The book I spoke of, though small in size, contains much information on this important subject. Let me advert to some instances of the kind mentioned above. Of coachmen and other drivers, Mr. Thackrah says that their exposure to the weather is thought to produce rheumatism and inflammation of the lungs. "I conceive, however," he adds, "that these diseases would rarely occur to abstemious men. It is intemperance which gives the susceptibility to such maladies; and it is intemperance which produces much greater." And here he speaks of morning-sickness; disease of the stomach and head; apoplexy and palsy. In regard to another trade, he says: "Though temperate millwrights are healthy, and continue their employ to a great age, often even to that of sixty, there is another class, who fit up the shafts and wheels, to convey the power from the steam-engine to the machinery, and who suffer from their debauched habit of life. These men earn high wages; take much of that pernicious compound called ale, and sometimes even drams in addition, and are moreover off work at the pot-house two or three days in the week. Such men, of course, are unhealthy and short-lived." These remarks may be applied to many classes of operatives in America, who receive high wages, and are not required to keep hours. For there is nothing more conducive to health and good habits

than for a man to have such employment and such pay as shall make it necessary for him to be moderately engaged every day.

A master pocketbook-maker informed our author that several of his people had died from consumption. "This, however," says he, "I should attribute not to the employ, but to intemperance." When blacksmiths are ill, "the cause is most frequently intemperance." Of hatters, he tells us, "they are often intemperate and short-lived." And of brewers, who are commonly regarded as patterns of portly strength, Mr. Thackrah observes: "As a body, they are far from healthy. Under a robust and often florid appearance, they conceal chronic disorders of the abdomen, particularly a congested (overfull) state of the venous system. When these men are accidentally hurt or wounded, they are more liable than other individuals to severe and dangerous effects. The ill-health of brewers is, however, evidently attributable to their habitual and unnecessary potation of beer."

After such statements as these, we need not be surprised when this judicious medical man comes to the conclusion, that intemperance is the grand bane of civilized life. These observations were made nearly twenty years ago in the populous town of Leeds, and are therefore introduced here in preference to still stronger statements more near to us in time and place; as it is common to suspect the latter as coloured by zeal for a popular

enterprise. In regard to mere health, then, it appears, that intoxicating drinks are unnecessary and noxious. To him who uses them, no circumstances can ensure health : to him who abstains, even great exposure is usually harmless. The first rule of health to be inculcated on our children, apprentices, and families, is to live without drink.

Here is work for masters and employers. Surely they have an accountability in this matter to God and to man. The apprentice and even the journeyman are, and ever ought to be under some control ; and the more fully the master sustains to them the part of a father, the greater will this control be. It will be an evil day for our land when either party shall feel that this bond is loosed. Let the household links be broken, and the political chain will have no binding force. If we wish such a reformation as shall make and keep our rising race virtuous and happy, we must begin at home, and masters must take some steps which are now unpopular. The vices of journeymen fall, with part of their burden, on master-workmen. As Mr. Thackrah very justly says, the latter may do much to lessen this great evil of intemperance. Does any one ask what can the master do? I reply, he can bring up his boys in good principles. He can press upon them the precepts of the Bible. He can correct their youthful errors. He can set them an example of rigid temperance. He can see that they spend

their evenings and their Sundays at home, in reading, or in some useful amusements. He can open facilities for them to enjoy the advantages of night-schools, libraries, Sunday-schools, Bible-classes, and lyceums. Is it asked what can he do for journeymen? I reply, some of these same things; for a man's being a journeyman does not put him beyond the reach of good advice or good example. But, over and above this, I adopt our author's language: "Let the master discharge from his employ every man who 'breaks work;' nay, let him admonish, and afterwards discharge every man who spends his evenings at the ale-house, or calls at the dram-shop. This is, in fact, the great point: for the evil is curable at the beginning." I anticipate what will be said about the difference between the state of things here and in the old country; about the independence of operatives, and the scarcity of skilled labour. Nevertheless every employer, who has patronage, is responsible to society and to God for the manner in which he employs it. He may not lord it over his men, but he has a right to know how and where they spend their evenings; for the plain reason that his own interests are involved in it. The inquiry is not always agreeable; nay, it will often give great offence; but what then? Is the truly benevolent man to do nothing which is disagreeable? Of a truth, we are not so delicate in the collection of a debt, or the prosecution of a claim. These lions are chiefly in the way of our

benevolent efforts. Until the law of the land shall render us more effectual aid, by erecting dykes against this flood of evil, every good man will do what he can to keep it out of his own doors.

The place where health, fortune, character, and happiness are lost, is the tavern. In their origin, public houses were places for the entertainment of the weary traveller; no object could be more benevolent. But they have become, by the change of times, chiefly remarkable as dens of drunkenness. Take away the bar, and in most cases you take away the publican's livelihood. But even now, if taverns were frequented chiefly by way-faring-men, it were well. But, far from this, they are sources of temptation and ruin to the neighbourhood. Where must you go to find the black leg, the drunkard, and the bully? To the tavern. Where is the young man who is never in his own shop, and whose shabby coat and anxious eye betoken debt and danger? In the tavern. Where were the journeymen and apprentices last night, who are this morning haggard and sallow, yawning and hiccuping over their work? At the tavern. I must in justice say, that I know innkeepers who are temperate, orderly men, and good citizens, and who deplore this state of things; and I know houses to which these remarks do not apply; but in the greater number of cases, the bar-room is the way to destruction; and to say that a man is often seen hanging about the tavern porch, under whatever pretence of business, is to

say that his work is neglected, his habits declining, and his company detestable.

In these and similar observations, I purposely avoid all mention of Temperance societies and their pledges, not because I am indifferent to the success of their endeavours, but because I wish to reach even those who do not admit the principle of these associations in its full extent. The sentiments which are here expressed, have been entertained by thoughtful men for scores of years; nor do I see how they can be rejected by any one who loves his country. Some of the happiest changes I have ever known have been wrought in men who have escaped the snare of strong drink. Such a one is PHELPS the coach-painter. Time was when he thought his paint would kill him outright, but for his brandy; and he could not conceive how he could be merry with a couple of friends, except over a bottle. He sang a good song, and, being a musician, used to be the life of the tavern suppers. Some of his bacchanal staves may still be heard at midnight by those who pass by the Bull's Head. Phelps had been well schooled, and sometimes wrote verses. But his eyes became weak, and his nose red, and the palette began to shake on his thumb. This did not arouse him, until his only son Ned was brought home drunk. He had fondly imagined that the boy had never seen him drink: it is the folly of many a parent, who rears a household of drunkards. That night Phelps broke every bottle

in his cellar. Last week I dined with him, and he sang me the following verses of his own making, over a goblet of excellent lemonade.

When the glass sparkles, and the group
Of wassail gathers there ;
Though friends invite, though spirits droop,
'Tis Wisdom cries, BEWARE !

Be it the juice of tortured grain
Which foaming tankards bear,
Or distillation of sweet-cane,
'Tis perilous—BEWARE !

Or should ripe clusters pour a flood
Whose varying hues compare
With gems, or Tyrian dye, or blood,
'Tis wine that mocks—BEWARE !

But doubly fly that fiery stream,
Forced by perverted care,
Through tortuous pipe, in pungent steam ;
Those drops are death—BEWARE !

Howe'er the Tempter drug his bowl,
Or mix his potions fair,
Why shouldst thou jeopard thus thy soul ?
Madness is near—BEWARE !

XXX.

MONEY.

“Yet to be just to these poor men of pelf,
 Each does but hate his neighbour as himself:
 Damn'd to the mines, an equal fate betides
 The slave that digs it, and the slave that hides.”

POPE.

THE good and the evil of money are the subject of our daily conversation, and neither can well be represented as greater than it is. The same book of wisdom which declares to us that “money answereth all things,” warns us that the love of it is a “root of all evil.” We love what costs us pains; our own work, or the fruit of it; our own little garden rather than our neighbour’s hot-house. It is, therefore, constantly observed that it is hard to wring money out of the hands of one who has earned it by little and little. Look at the farmer; even if he owns thousands of acres, he is sometimes startled at a call for the disbursement of twenty dollars: while the merchant, who gains and loses by fifties and hundreds, will transfer ten thousand dollars’ worth of stock in five minutes. Women, who seldom—dear creatures—have the handling of large sums, are more frugal in the disposition of their means, than their more hard-

hearted husbands. Hence the great moralist avers that mendicants seldom beg of women. However this may be, it is undeniable that where money is hardly got, it is sure to be prized sufficiently. Let a man work hard for his dollar and he will be in danger of setting too high a value upon it; and thus, by imperceptible degrees, frugality grows into avarice and thrift into meanness.

It is not the mere coin, the material gold, silver, copper, and alloy that we love; at least in the outset. The miser, who is a possessed man, may transfer his regards to the sign from the thing signified, and gloat over dollars and doubloons; but what the most love is what the money will bring. To use a large word, it is the *potentiality* of happiness. We turn every thing into money. We measure every thing by money. It is money which marks the injury done by a slander or a blow. As we measure the force of an engine by horse-power, so we measure an honourable office by dollars. Men value their lives at certain sums, and persons could be found who would be bribed to run the risk of being bit by a mad dog. In consequence of this universal applicability of money as the measure of value, it comes to stand for the things which it measures. We look with complacency on the key which unlocks our treasures; and gaze on a dirty bank-note, which is only a rag.

In Pitcairn's island, at the latest accounts, there was no money, nor any need of it. But does it

follow that there can be no avarice there? I think not. The passion may look beyond the medium to the end in view, but it is still the same. The dislike to part with our cash, when reduced to its principles, is a mode of selfishness. It is only one aspect of our love of the things which money will buy. If any man would guaranty to us all these things for life, we would freely give him the money. Hence the moral evils of avarice. But for this the love of gold would be as innocent as the love of roses and lilies.

But even on the selfish principle, I have sometimes thought that a more refined and profound view of the matter would loosen our hold on the purse. By pinching hard we hurt nobody but ourselves. Every one sees that if a man spends none of his money, he is wretched; hence the name *miser*, which is only the Latin for a wretch. But many make it the business of their lives to come as near this as they can. They sail as near the wind as is possible. Sound economy will teach a man that a liberal outlay of money is in some cases no more a loss, than a liberal sowing of wheat. *STOLIDO* has adopted the saving maxim never to cut the packthread of a parcel, but always to untie it: he therefore fumbles at a hard knot for ten minutes, in which he could have earned the worth of ten such packthreads. *BASSO* grudges sixpence for a dose of physic, and in the end loses six weeks. We all agree that *time is money*. Why so? Because time will procure

us money, or, what is the same, money's worth. But we are not so ready to admit, though it is equally true, that health is money—that temperance is money—that good habits are money—that character is money. Nay, I go further than this: if we must value every thing by this mercenary standard, then I say, *ease is money*, because it is worth money, and we labour all our life to earn it. Comfort is money, and happiness is money.

These remarks are certainly not intended to foster the disposition to estimate every thing by pounds, shillings, and pence. God forbid! Our money-making nation needs no spur in their race: we are already pointed at by the finger of nations. But as the world's ready reckoners insist on gauging human bliss by this rule, I wish to show that on their own principles a man may be too saving. Even the rule of the usurer in the old play,* which was short enough to be engraven on his ring, and which is engraven on many a heart, *Tu tibi cura*, "Take care of number one," is often violated by unwise parsimony. We may be sparing to our damage. There are better things than money. O that I could ring it through every shop, factory, and counting-house of my country! There is good which gold cannot buy, and which to barter for gold were ruin. It cannot buy the kindly affections of the fireside. It cannot buy

* The "Groat's Worth of Wit," by Robert Green.

the blessings of friendship. It cannot buy the serene comforts of virtue, the quiet of conscience, the joys of religion. This lesson should be inculcated on the young. It is idle to fear that such a lesson will make them careless or profuse. It is a lesson opposed, not to frugality, but to parsimony. Those who learn it will not hoard, but neither will they squander. They will look on money, not as an ultimate good, but as the representative of purchasable advantages; and they will count it as nothing when put in the opposite scale to moral and eternal things, which are above all price.

XXXI.

RISKS AND SPECULATIONS.

“Neither a borrower nor a lender be ;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.”

Hamlet.

OF all the ways of making money, that which belongs to a man's proper trade or business is the safest, easiest, and most honest. He who would, even in a worldly sense, prosper, must let many gay chances of wealth flit before him, without drawing him from his daily work. This, however, is very much against the spirit of the age. To become rich by sudden leaps is more attractive than to plod on for years with scarcely perceptible gains. Yet the truly solid men are those who have pursued the latter course. It is not too much to say, that at the time of this present writing, there are a thousand mechanics, manufacturers, and small tradesmen, who are trying to become rich by what they call speculation. Some, in a low sphere, deal in horses. Though this is not their trade, they are perpetually driving some bargain, or making some match, or showing off the paces of some famous roadster. It becomes

a passion, business is neglected ; and, so far as my observation goes, horse-dealers do not always maintain the purest character for straightforward conduct. Some are, or were, very full of buying and selling lots about our growing towns and cities. Others are all for granite-quarries. While many behold visions of untold wealth in the silk business, and forsake their own calling, to plant acres of the Chinese mulberry. One in fifty of these draws a prize ; the rest, after some months of suspense, sit down with blanks, and find their proper business near to ruin.

These hopes commonly lead to expensive habits, unknown to the artisans of former days. Hence, my friend Mrs. BATES used often to remind her son Arthur of his father's frugality. "Dear mother," cried Arthur, on one of these occasions, with a face of great vexation, "pray, pray, don't quote my good father any more. The next thing will be to rig me out in his white neckcloth and small-clothes."

"Arthur," said the old lady, with tears in her eyes, "the image which has been before my mind for forty years, will sometimes be in your way ; but bear with me, and I will not say any more about your father."

"Say what you please," said the relenting son.

"All I have to say is this : you know that your father was a thriving mechanic—he had no ambition to be more—he became wealthy, as you might now have been, but for the rash adventure

of your two uncles, in 1815, which swept away our property. When your father began life, however, as you are now doing, he was frugal and domestic; he stuck to his trade; and after his great reverse, he returned to the habits of his youth. His maxim was, Waste nothing—risk nothing—borrow nothing.”

“Exactly, and had he lived to this day, he would have felt, as I feel, the change of times, and would think as little of owing five hundred dollars, as he did of borrowing a pinch of snuff.”

“Arthur,” said the good old woman, smiling with the consciousness of experience, “the maxims of economy do not change with the fashions. They go by the nature of things.”

“Surely, madam, money is not now what money was before the Revolution!”

“Perhaps not, in a certain sense; but, as the shopkeepers say, *money is money*. Bread, and clothes, and fuel, are not got for nothing. You talk of credit: credit implies borrowing; and borrowing implies paying. Creditors are made of no milder stuff than when I was a girl; and, for all that I can see, a cistern that is always running and never receiving is as like to run dry as any cistern of the olden time. To be plain—what was the occasion of your haste in visiting New York, yesterday?”

“Then, to answer plainly, in my turn,—though I am sure you are going to misunderstand it,—it

was to see several of my friends in William street.”

“ Ah ! and why so anxious to see them at this, the busiest season of your trade ? ”

“ You press me—but I will be frank—it was to get a lift in the pecuniary way—common thing—to meet an arrangement—a mere trifle—a name or two was all I wanted—a-hem—a little matter in——”

“ In bank, you would say, my son. Speak it out. I understand you. Now consider ; what change has come over the plain old-fashioned business of coach-making, that you should need to be a borrower ? Let an old woman tell your fortune—your intimacy with banks will end in your being a bankrupt.”

With a blush and a sneer, Arthur went to his drying-room, then to his trimming-room, then to his counting-room, and then to the open air ; but nowhere could he fix his attention. He had become a borrower. He kept his horses and his dogs, and gave dinners, and went to the springs. To meet this expense, he had several little speculations, added to his regular trade. Instead of straitening his expenses to suit his means, he plunged into new indulgences ; and to meet their cost, he drew upon future and unreal gains. In America, perhaps, more than elsewhere, it is very common to find mechanics, and even professional and salaried men, falling into embarrassments, to which formerly only mercantile adventurers were

thought liable. How can a young man sit down at his desk, or examine his books, when every paper and almost every knock remind him that he is in debt? Arthur Bates was oftener in the street than in his shop; and every part of his proper business became distasteful to him. He was often seen in the humbling situation of a vexatious supplicant at the doors of men who were far below him in every scale but that of dollars and cents. He who becomes a borrower cannot foretell at what point of the descent he will stop. From a custom it grows into a habit. The first plunge is the most revolting; after that, the smooth lapse becomes smoother with each successive yielding.

Borrowing became so easy with Arthur, that he began to scribble on his waste papers the goodly proverbs, "Nothing venture, nothing lose," and "In for a penny, in for a pound." To one so diseased, no stimulant can be worse than a morning paper: it offers schemes of wealth on every page. These have a great charm for the man who feels that nothing but a grand "operation" can get him out of the slough, and who, at the same time, reads of thousands realized on lots at Brooklyn, Brighton, and Chicago, or by sales of granite or mulberries. True, these things have had their day; but so will other things. In process of time, Arthur Bates removed from a thriving country town to the great metropolis. No one who knows the world will be surprised at

the change. It is not long since I could have named a round dozen of young men, attorneys, mechanics, and even doctors, who had closed their shops and offices, and gone into speculation. Arthur had entered the Alsatia of borrowing. After many fruitless attempts, he despaired of making his simple mother comprehend how a man may live and do well, without any regular business; or how these rapid turns of the wheel differed from gambling. He descanted to her upon the credit system, the rise of property, the diversities of script, and the fortunes made by happy investments. He unrolled before her without effect, lithographic maps of unbuilt cities in the West, or of Venices to be conjured up in the North River; he turned her into stone, with calculations about the sugar beet and the morus multicaulis. Poor Mrs. Bates was too old to mend, and read out of her old book, that *the borrower is servant to the lender*.* In these debates Arthur was aided by a new friend of his, Peleg Peck, Esq. Mr. Peck was a son of the house of Peck, Pigeon, and Fitch, in Pearl street. After the usual time spent in billiards and dramatic criticism, and after being bowed out of his father's counting-house by the elder partner, Mr. George W. Pigeon of Providence, he opened a livery stable at Brooklyn. Thence, by some unexplained change, he became booking-clerk in a stage-office in Market street, Philadelphia, and his

*.Prov. xxii. 7.

last ostensible calling was that of clerk in a Mississippi steamboat. But he had seen wonders in the great West, and had come back to engage other adventurers. It was after a dialogue between Mr. Peck and Arthur, that the latter hastily entered his mother's parlour. "Why so flurried, my son?" said Mrs. Bates, as her son threw himself into an elbow chair. "Dearest mother! nothing uncommon, I assure you. But one who belongs to the world cannot but partake of its great concussions. The motions of the great sea reach even our little creeks."

"Pray, come down from your stilts, Arthur: you used wiser as well as plainer talk when you were a well-doing carriage-maker. Surely *your* connexions with the moneyed world are slight."

"Ah! there it is, again. Your notions are out of date. Indeed, mother, I do not know that you have got the least insight into the great modern system of debt and credit."

"Be it so, my dear. Take a glass of water, and give me such lessons as suit my simplicity. But observe, before you begin, that I am not in my dotage yet, and that I have long observed that there is no subject on which men can talk longer without ideas, than on this same matter of credit, stocks, banks, and speculation. But perhaps you can trade in the same way without capital."

"No jests, I entreat.—In sober earnestness—there is a great pressure—a panic, you may say—Wall street like the mouth of a bee-hive in June

—Three houses shut up this morning in Pearl street—and I have every reason to believe that the fall of cotton has ruined Cromwell and Zebulons of Mobile, which will drag down Grubbs, Ishmael, and Grubbs.”

“Hold! hold! my son, what has come over you! Panic—Wall street—Ishmael! And what concern can you have with these affairs? You are not a bank-director, a broker, or a Jew.”

“True, my dear mother—true—but let me explain. The modern system is so bound—that is, such is the concatenation—just to think, that bills on London are no longer—in a word, money is so scarce.—But your old notions are so queer, that I shall seem ridiculous.”

“Indeed you do,” said Mrs. Bates, drawing herself up with some sternness. “Indeed you do. This rigmarole is a mere screen for ignorance—yes, pardon a mother’s plainness—for your ignorance of this complicated system of licensed gambling. Like too many, you have neglected your proper business; you have tried to retrieve matters, by unwarrantable means; and now, in your embarrassments, you are trying to lay all the blame on public measures, banks, and brokers. A plain mechanical business, as thrifty as yours was, needs no such connexions. What did your poor father know of banks? Yet he was worth his forty thousand dollars, just before his two younger brothers decoyed him into a share in their liabilities. Arthur, I see your des-

perate game. I have seen it long. You have failed to grow rich by slow earnings. You have borrowed to support your needless expenses. You have filled one vessel from another, neither of them being your own. You are now staking all your credit on these paltry speculations. You have become a mere borrower; a borrower of what you can never pay."

I am not writing a biography, and therefore it will be enough to say, that Arthur Bates has for two years been clerk in the counting-room of the establishment owned by his father; a poor but honest man, and deeply penitent for his follies.

XXXII.

THE WORKING-MAN IN WANT.

“He that is down needs fear no fall.”—BUNYAN.

THERE is not, perhaps, a country in the world where the extremes of human condition are less frequent than in our own: we are unacquainted alike with princely wealth and abject wretchedness. Yet even here it is not always sunshine, even with the honest, temperate, and industrious. As a general rule, indeed, any man of ordinary health, strength, and capacity, can make his living, if he chooses: but there are exceptions to the rule. It would be as absurd as it is inhuman to consider all poverty as the result of vice. The contrary is manifest every day. All men are fallible in judgment, and may fall into wrong projects. The best plans may fail from uncontrollable circumstances. The incapacity of a partner or an agent, or the fraud of a neighbour, or some sudden change in the price of an article, in the demand for a particular fabric, or even in the most trifling fashion, is often sufficient to bring to penury such as have never laid up any thing. But the case is so plain in the eyes of all observing

and benevolent men, that I shall not dwell on this point, but confine myself to a few suggestions for those who, by whatever path, have got to the bottom of the hill.

My friend, let me take you by the hand : I like the pressure of a poor man's hand, and I am not one of those Pharisical helpers who can see nothing to pity where there is any thing to blame. It is enough for me that you are in straits : I ask not how you came there. But, let me whisper—it might be well if you would ask it yourself. Perhaps you have been lavish, when you had abundance. Perhaps you have been idle, or improvident ; or your children have been too fine, or your wife has haunted auctions. Or, peradventure, you have been too fond of a horse or a gun ; or the coin has found its way from your till into the bar-room or the eating-house ; or you have been a customer of the brewer, or the tobacconist. No matter—whatever the wrong step may have been, the course of wisdom is for you to learn by experience. Dread the fire which has scorched you ; perhaps it is the best and the cheapest lesson you ever had. Now, when you are cool and collected, in the shades of the valley, take a survey of the path which you ought to have trodden, and make up your mind to choose and to pursue it.

Be sure not to listen to the voice of pride. This is what bars the arrow of poverty. True, if you are in absolute want, and near starvation, there will be wo enough even without pride. But

in the great majority of reverses, the feeling of mortification is the worst part. If you have enough to support nature, and are doing all that is in your power, banish the consideration of other people's thoughts, which cannot make your case either better or worse. With a good conscience, you may safely leave your case to the care of Providence.

You are, it is true, at the foot of the ladder ; but what then ? The way up is just the same as before. Never despond ; this is the grand rule, and I repeat it, never despond. The most successful men have had their reverses. "Try again," is a good motto, and your condition must be bad indeed, if this does not set you right. At any rate, brooding over losses cannot repair them. Your melancholy feelings can do you no good, and will do you much harm. Despondency strikes a palsy into your arm, and cuts off all the chances of your recovery. It is, perhaps, as great an evil in poverty as in sickness. After all, it is not a leading trait in the American character ; we are a sanguine people, and, like boats which easily right themselves, our merchants and mechanics rise out of troubles with an alacrity which is surprising. Encourage this hopeful temper, but let it be natural. As you value your happiness shun all artificial comforters. The man who, in embarrassment, resorts to the bottle, or the tavern, may be said to be half lost. However bad your condition may be, it is not so wretched as this will

make you. If intoxicating liquors are always dangerous, they are a thousand-fold so to the man who is in straits.

You are embarrassed, but not undone. Now let me warn you against suddenly abandoning your present business. In nine cases out of ten, those who leave the trade to which they have been bred, find the change disastrous. You cannot be as much at home in any other employment, and your having failed in one effort is no sign that you will fail in the next. On the same principle I would say, beware of suddenly changing your place of residence. This almost always involves loss of time, loss of money, and loss of credit. Whatever may have brought you down, resolve to retrieve your former standing in the very place where you have lost it. That which needs alteration is not your circumstances, but yourself. Unless you can change this by a removal, you had better remain. There is, of course, an exception in those cases where a man's business is overstocked, where there is no demand for his labour, or where there exist other insuperable obstacles to his progress.

Supposing you, then, to have come to the wise resolve to build on the old foundation, let me give you another hint: Do not relax your exertions for a moment. It is strange, but common, to see men making poverty an excuse for idleness. Their business has failed, and accordingly they walk about the streets for a month with their hands in

their pockets. When the waterman finds that his boat has been carried by the tide far below the landing-place, he does not relax his rowing, and yield himself to the adverse waves, but braces every muscle, and pulls hard against the stream. Redouble your exertions, and you may soon be extricated. Particularly when one is in debt, this is the best encouragement which he can give his creditors to allow him every favour. And if it has been your misfortune to be involved in debt, let me beseech you to avoid plunging any deeper into this slough. Necessity has no law, but so long as you can procure an honest mouthful of food, avoid this embarrassment.

There are occasions on which, if ever, men are open to temptation. When want pinches, when wife and family cry for food, those whose honour has never wavered will sometimes think of dishonest resources. Stifle the viper in your bosom!

Last of all, I say, do not repine. Discontent will only imbitter the distress which it cannot relieve; and it is as wrong as it is useless and injurious. Be humble, patient, and resigned to the arrangements of Providence, and you will not fail to see better days.

XXXIII.

THE VILLAGE REVISITED.

“I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw.
And as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Home to return—and die at home at last.”

GOLDSMITH.

AFTER an absence of many years I lately revisited the village of Ashford. This is a small inland place, in the midst of farmers, and undistinguished by manufactures or extensive trade. Its inhabitants are chiefly mechanics and store-keepers.—On my entrance, I perceived that the place had undergone fewer changes than is common in America. There was the same long, straggling street, widening at one place into a green or common, upon which stood an unsightly market-place, of that red brick which so disfigures and degrades the architectural prospects of our country. There were the same inns, and before one of them the same creaking sign of an Indian Queen, at which I used to throw stones when I was a boy. The

principal tavern had been enlarged, and I was told that the present incumbent was the last of six who had practised at that bar within twenty years. Besides those who had been burned out, one had been hanged, and one had become a reformed character. I was sorry to see that the other tavern-keeper was a person who had in former days been a promising saddler.

My attention was drawn forcibly to the places of the old mechanics. I looked for old JAMES SORREL, the chair-maker; there was no trace of him or his. None of his sons were bred to his trade, and those who survive are in the West. I also looked for MARK BELVILLE, the hatter—the only one of his trade in those days. He ran away from his creditors fifteen years ago. The reason I found it easy to guess: his shop was always a rendezvous for the idlers of the whole street. The little English tailor, who was next in the row, had become too old to work; I was told he had become rich and miserly; he had no children, and, as I remember, could not read. ROBERTS, the shoemaker, was still visible, a gray-haired old man, pacing about the street with an unsteady step, his hands behind him. After many years' hard work, he has retired to live with a married niece; his sons are in Ohio, except one who keeps up the trade in a neighbouring town. The old man has one serious calamity: he has no solace for his old age, either of mind or heart. In his young days he had but one rule, *Be honest*

and industrious. How many think this all-sufficient! He observed it; he worked early and late, till his back was bowed down, and his eyesight gone. He succeeded—that is, he accumulated wealth. In order to do this, he saved both time and money. He had no books but an almanac, and always voted at town-meeting for the lowest possible sum to common schools. His charity began at home; and he took care to let it end there; and resolving to be just before he should be generous, he was all his life practising this first lesson. Now, in his old age, he is wealthy, but wretched. The domestic charm which keeps some families together, was unknown to him, and he is a solitary widower; though, if you number his children, the family is large. I have written down in my pocket-book, that it will not do for a man to make a god of his trade; and that, in spite of Ben Franklin, there are other goods in life than popularity and thrift. The very next house is occupied by two young brokers, partners, who are playing the very same game. A new race of loungers appeared in the streets, but in no respect inferior to those who had been before them, having the same airs, and very much the same haunts. It is a class which propagates itself with remarkable ease, and there are few country towns in which there may not be found abundant specimens. The spots once occupied by the shops of two bakers, I was pleased to see covered with beautiful pleasure-grounds, and embellished with

two mansions a good deal superior to any thing in Ashford. I knew their occupants well. They were dutiful boys, and public-spirited men. The time and money, which at intervals they bestowed upon objects of common interest, have been amply made up to them by increase of credit and respectability. Benevolence is good policy. By doing good they are more known, and more revered. The chief difficulty is for them to decline offices of trust; and they are already concerned in the administration and settlement of more estates than any of their fellow-townsmen.—Though not related, they have always been good friends; and I am told they are about to join in erecting, chiefly at their own expense, a Lyceum, or building for public lectures and philosophical experiments. They furnish a happy example of that healthful popularity which may be attained without an undue meddling with party politics.

By this I am reminded of OLIVER CRABBE, the tallow-chandler. One would have supposed that Oliver's business might have occupied all his hours, but he found time to spend upon the affairs of the public. He was oftener in his front shop than in his dipping-room, because his front shop was a sort of news-room. There, upon bench and counter, at almost any hour, might be seen the sage quidnuncs of the town. It was the village exchange. In spite of odours "not of amber," that door seemed to attract to itself perpetual groups, which might be likened to the clusters at

the aperture of a bee-hive. Here the newspapers were read, and the public business settled. As you might expect, Oliver was chief speaker; he loved to hear himself talk, which I have observed to be the grand inducement to mingle in politics. There was no meeting of the party to which he belonged, at which he did not find it easy to attend, whatever might be the state of his business. At town meetings, his voice was lifted up, and when he passed between the tellers, he was usually followed by a retinue of humble political admirers. I am not sure that he did not sometimes dream of higher honours, for I have heard him rallied about a sheet of paper, on which he had practised, in a fine flourishing hand, the mysterious words, *Pub. Doc. Free* OLIVER CRABBE. Oliver has been in the poor-house for five years.

The grave-yard of the little village gave evident tokens that almost a generation had passed away. In walking among the green mounds, and marble memorials, I could not but observe that a large proportion of those who lay there had by no means arrived at extreme age. Another reflection which forced itself on me was, that the epitaphs never told the whole truth. The young man who accompanied me seemed very sensible of this. I would, for instance, read aloud from a headstone the pretty verses commemorative of some spotless youth, and my guide would say, "He died of drink." Of another, equally celebrated over his grave, he would observe: "This man was a

drunkard." Indeed, I shudder to think how many whom I once knew among the working classes of this place, have been brought to their grave, either directly or indirectly, by strong drink. As I sauntered about the streets and neighbouring lanes, I would occasionally stumble on one and another of the few surviving toppers, who seem to be left as warnings by Providence, like the blackened pine-trunks after a forest-burning. It is remarkable that when you find an aged drunkard, you commonly find that he did not begin very early, and also that he has murdered several children by his example, and sent them before him into eternity.

But my reflections must draw to a close. Looking at the town as a whole, I see some increase, and some improvement; but, in the midst of this, too great a disposition to be still and do nothing. *It will do for the present*, is a ruinous motto. It has led DICK HARLOW to leave an old post-and-rail fence in front of his house and shop, until he has grown to be an old man. It has allowed an old ruinous well-curb to disgrace the garden of JONES, the wheelwright, ever since he was a boy. It has kept half a dozen little door-yards without a single improvement, when they might, every one of them, have been, this fine April morning, full of hyacinths, crocuses, violets, and moss-pinks. And, to speak of more public concerns, this same motto might be inscribed over the shabby town-house,

shadeless streets, and filthy horse-pond, which continue to be nuisances of the village of Ashford.

After all, there are a score or two of honest, healthy, happy artisans, who are thriving in their business, and bringing up their households in virtuous habits. There are two good schools, and a new church; a debating society, and a musical club; a reading-room and a lyceum; and at any moment at which the body of the people shall agree to abandon their sleepy motto, there will be a hundred more good things to recount.

XXXIV.

THE CONTENTED WORKING-MAN.

“I love to hear of those, who, not contending
 Nor summon’d to contend for virtue’s prize,
 Miss not the humbler good at which they aim ;
 Blest with a kindly faculty to blunt
 The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
 Into their contraries the petty plagues
 And hinderances with which they stand beset.”

WORDSWORTH.

IN our earliest story-books, and in the copies set for us by our writing-masters, we all learned the value of contentment. But in real life, it is remarkable how little this excellent means of happiness is cultivated. The other evening, as I sat under my willow with UNCLE BENJAMIN and Mr. APPLETREE, the question arose whether men were made unhappy more by their own fault, or the fault of others. The good schoolmaster gave it as his opinion, that in our country most men might be happy if they would. “I except,” said he, “cases of signal calamity ; but as Virgil says of the farmers, I say of most of my neighbours, ‘O too happy men ! if ye only knew your own advantages !’ ”

Here I ventured to put in my oar, by saying,

what, perhaps, may not be new to the reader, that there are few men who do not wish for something which they have not. "Yes," said uncle Benjamin, "according to the old saying, 'Enough means a little more.' Every man wants to reach a higher peak of the mountain before he sits down, when he might as well sit down where he is." "You remind me of Plutarch, uncle Benjamin," said the schoolmaster. "In his life of Pyrrhus, he relates that this monarch was once talking with Cineas, a favourite orator and counsellor, about the plan of his future conquests. First, he meant to conquer the Romans. Then he would extend his power over all Italy. Then he would pass to Sicily, to Lybia, to Carthage. 'But when we have conquered all,' asked Cineas, 'what are we to do then?' 'Why, then, my friend,' said Pyrrhus, laughing, 'we will take our ease, and drink and be merry.' 'But why,' said Cineas, 'can we not sit down and do that just as well now?' The same may be applied to smaller men than Pyrrhus."

"Ay, ay, you say truly," said the old man, shaking out the ashes, and preparing for a fresh pipe; "you say truly. Few men are wise in time. They chase their game so hotly that when they have run it down they can't enjoy it. There was our neighbour Gripe: Mr. Quill knew him well. He and I began life together. Gripe started in a small way, but by everlasting pains made himself a rich man. He had no children,

and few expenses, yet he always pressed on as if the constable was at his heels. There was no repose—there was no relaxation. Round and round he went, like a horse in a mill. I often urged him to stop. ‘You have enough,’ I would say, ‘begin to enjoy it; why make yourself the prey of these vexing cares?’ But no—he could not be content. At length his wife died; he was left alone, rich but friendless. He gave up business, but it was too late. His fireside had no charms, and he fell into a melancholy which was soon followed by a mortal complaint. So he died without having ever known what it was to sit down and enjoy a moment of quiet. ‘The whole of his property was scattered to the winds, by a pair of grand-nephews, his heirs-at-law.’”

“Nature requires but a little,” said Mr. Apple-tree. “We are the slaves of our artificial wants. I have accustomed myself to say, in looking at many a piece of luxury, ‘I can do without it.’ Even the ancient heathen had learned as much as this. Their philosophers endeavoured to persuade men to seek happiness by narrowing their desires, rather than by increasing their gratifications. ‘He who wants least,’ says one of them, ‘is most like the gods, who want nothing.’”

“Those old fellows were mighty wise, I dare say,” said uncle Benjamin; “but I warrant you they found it hard to practise as they preached. At the same time no one can deny the truth of what they affirmed. And I have often told my

son Sammy, that nothing would be a greater curse to him than to have all his desires gratified; according to the old story of the Three Wishes. On the other hand, if a man would but buckle his desires within the belt of his circumstances, he would be happy in an Irish cabin."

"Do you think, uncle Benjamin, that men usually gain this sort of wisdom in proportion as they rise in the world?" "No, no—far from it. Pampering does not produce patience. He who grows rich is only feeding a fever. Indulgence begets peevishness. Those tailors and shoemakers, along our street, who are just shutting up for the night, are happier than the wealthy sportsmen and idlers over the river; nay, they are happier than they will be themselves, when, like so many American mechanics, they become wealthy, and live in their own great houses. I have often heard Thrale, the rich brewer, say that he did not feel at home in his own parlour, and that he looked back with regret to the days when he had but three rooms in his house."

This led me to relate the story of my cousin Barnaby Cox. He was a book-binder, in a small way, and took a sweet little woman to wife, and lived in the lower part of Second street. He seemed as happy a fellow as worldly things can make any one; he earned his pleasures, and he enjoyed them. He needed no balls, taverns, gaming, or theatre to enliven his evenings. This was while he lived, as you may say, from hand

to mouth. By some turn in the wheel, he became prosperous; he formed new connexions, and got into new lines of business; in short, he became a wealthy man. But riches did not make him a better man. He lives in splendour in Chestnut street; but he has gone down in health and cheerfulness. He is restless, and listless, and seems never to know what to do next. His great house is seldom visited except by a few relations, and if the truth could be told, he sighs for the evenings he used to enjoy when work was done.

“The case is not rare,” said Mr. Appletree; “but I have one to relate, which, I think, you will allow, is really so. It may be taken as a fair offset to Mr. Quill’s. In the neighbourhood where I was bred, there is a man whom I shall call ARATOR. He was the son of a wealthy and somewhat proud family, and fell heir to a large and well-kept estate. There was not a nobler farm or mansion in the whole country-side. Being a man of studious habits, and indolent and melancholy, he allowed his affairs to run on rather negligently, and partly from this cause, and partly from the treachery of his principal legal agent, he became what the world calls a ruined man.

“Ruined, however, he was not. After the first shock of misfortune, he seemed to be awakened to new energies. His indolence and his gloom took leave of him. He set about the retrieving of his fortune, with an energy which astonished those who knew him best. True, he is likely to be

a poor man as long as he lives, but he is in a fair way to pay his debts, and he is cheerful and contented. Not long since I called upon him at his humble dwelling, in the midst of a little piece of land which he tills, He was in his working dress, and moist with the labours of the hay-field; but he received me with a radiant smile, and ushering me into his sitting-room, cried out, ‘ Here, Lucy, is our old friend Appletree ; he has not forgotten the champagne and venison of Strawberry hill, nor have we : we cannot treat him to any ; but we can teach him, when our children come in, that there is some truth still in the old stories about cottages and contentment.’ And the blended blush and tear of his wife, with the whoop and halloo of the boys that just then bounded into the room, told me that, by coming down in the world, they had risen in the scale of true enjoyment.”

XXXV.

WHO IS THE WORKING-MAN?

Cade. Dost thou use to write thy name? or hast thou a mark to thyself, like an honest plain-dealing man?

Clerk. Sir, I thank God, I have been so well brought up that I can write my name.

All. He hath confessed; away with him: he's a villain, and a traitor.

Cade. Away with him, I say; hang him with his pen and inkhorn about his neck."

Second Part of King Henry VI.

IN using the title working-man, I have merely availed myself of a phrase which is commonly understood. As usually employed, it designates the artisan, the mechanic, the operative, or the labourer; all, in a word, who work with their hands. But I trust no reader of these pages will so far misunderstand me, as to suppose that I mean to deny that there are multitudes of other classes, who work, and work hard, and whose honest industry is as useful to society as that of the smith or the carpenter.

There are many varieties of industry, and the common distinction is a just one between head-work and hand-work. But then the two are so intermingled that it is almost impossible to draw

the line between them. The mathematical instrument maker is as industrious and indispensable a character as the puddler in an iron foundry; but the work of the former is chiefly head-work: and then what a difference between the bodily labour of the two! Yet no reasonable person could exclude the instrument maker from the number of working-men. The nice operations, however, of this workman, as also those of the watchmaker, jeweller, lapidary, and engraver, do not, in a strict sense, deserve the name of labour any more than that of the man who writes his six hours daily in a clerk's office. Yet how many are there who would deny the honours of industry to the jaded clerk, even though his toils are a thousand-fold more wasting and disheartening than those of the mason or wheelwright!

In every great establishment both kinds of service are required, and neither party should look upon the other with jealousy or disdain. There must, for instance, in a great printing establishment, be men to work the presses, and boys to see to the rollers; and there must be the setting up of the type; but, again, there must be correcting of the proofs, which is purely head-work. There must be keeping of accounts, which is of the same nature, and equally indispensable. And, if I may be allowed to say a word in behalf of my own calling, there is the poor author, but for whom the press would stand still; and whose labour is not the least exhausting of the whole.

Yet he is the very one who, according to some of the popular doctrines of the day, should be denied the name and credit of a working-man! In every extensive manufactory, the carter, drayman, or porter, is not more necessary than the clerk or book-keeper. The conductor of a railroad train, though he does little or nothing with his hands, is as needful as the brake-man or engineer. The skilful director of a cotton-mill, who contrives and manages, is just as necessary as the operatives. No great building can be erected without previous drawings; the man who plans and executes these, has no more labour than he who keeps the books; and both these are no less working-men than the stone-sawyer in the marble-yard, or the hod-carrier upon the scaffold. The pilot does no hard labour on board ship, yet he is as important a working-man as the hardest tar. So, likewise, in the manufacture of complicated machines, such as steam-engines, not a blow can be effectually struck until the chief engineer has gone about his head-work, and made his calculations: and the sturdy fellow who toils at the anvil, or the grindstone, should not forget that his employer is tasked as severely and as needfully as himself. There is really such a thing as head-work, and it is hard work. This is proved by the appearance of those who are devoted to it. Clerks, book-keepers, accountants, and all writers, are liable to suffer exceedingly in point of health, from their confined atmosphere and fixed position.

They are often as much distressed by rest as labouring men by motion; the maintenance of one posture injures them in various ways. Their digestive organs soon give way, they grow lean and sallow, and low-spirited, and are ready to envy every wood-sawyer they meet. Surely it is unjust to sneer at such men, as drones in the hive.

The concerns of life cannot be carried on without a mixture of both head-work and hand-work. Strike out either sort from any extensive establishment, and the work must come to an end. A hasty observer, on going into a ship-yard, and seeing the bustle, and hearing the hum of business, would be ready to think that every thing was done by main force, by the saw, hammer, and adze. But on looking a little deeper, he would find that quite as important a part of the work is done out of sight, in the noiseless office, or model-loft. He would see one man writing letters, or copying them in a book, another posting into a leger, a third drawing plans, a fourth making tedious computations, and a fifth overseeing the whole, and acting as head to a hundred pair of hands. How soon would our famous steam-engines, which have attracted admiration even in England, cease to be produced, if it were not for the contriving heads of our Stevenses, Baldwins, Norrises, and Merricks! Can any man deny that James Watt or Sir Richard Arkwright were working as really and as hard for the common good, when they

were studying out their great inventions, as if they had been filing brass, or casting iron, or turning a lathe? And was not Sir Humphry Davy, in his laboratory, when contriving his safety-lamp, as truly working in a useful vocation as the humblest miner with his pick-axe and shovel? But the principle admits of much wider application, to those, namely, who have no immediate connexion with manual labour. I maintain, that every man who honestly supports himself by industrious application to useful business is a working-man. The mere amount of motion or bodily labour does not make so great a difference. If it did, we might find it hard to show that there is not a wider step between the coal-heaver and the tailor, than between the tailor and the accountant. Roger Sherman was first a shoemaker, and then a Congressman: but he worked harder and did more good in the latter than in the former capacity. John Newton was first a sailor and then a preacher; but no one who knows his history will deny that he was vastly more useful to society in his second calling. The salesman and travelling agent are working-men, no less than the manufacturer. The affairs of commerce require clerks, bankers, merchants, calculators, editors of journals. Not less necessary are physicians, teachers, lawyers, clergymen, and judges. No man can be said to lead an easy life who faithfully discharges the duties of any one of these professions; and this would be soon found to be true, by any

doubter who should undertake to assume their place for a single week. If knowledge is power, then those who make great 'acquirements in science are contributing in the highest degree to the productions of human art. Many a man can do ten times as much in this way as in any other. The late lamented Judge Buel, of Albany, whose death has been announced since this work was going through the press, may be named as an instance in point. Though he well knew what it was to labour with his own hands as a practical farmer, yet no one who has looked at the pages of the "Cultivator," will doubt for an instant that by conducting this work he did more for the agriculture, and consequently for the wealth of his country, than any hundred farmers, as good as he, could have accomplished by following the plough. Let us hear no more of this cant about working men and idle men: all industrious citizens are working-men. There are drones, indeed, but they exist as largely in the ranks of nominal labour as elsewhere.

Nearly allied to this subject, is another to which the most serious and impartial attention is requested. I mean the opposition which some have attempted to set on foot, between the poor and the rich. It is natural for the opposition to exist in some degree; but they are traitors to society who make it their business to foster it. It is natural for the hard working-man, sorely pressed to support his family, to look with envy upon the

glittering equipage or marble house of his wealthy neighbour. But to seek the regulation of this matter by tumult and spoliation would be the extreme of madness. There never has been, and there never will be a country without this same division into rich and poor. Attempts have, indeed, been made for a season, to have every thing in common; somewhat after the visions of Robert Owen; but they have always failed. This was tried two hundred years ago among the romantic settlers of Virginia; but the bubble soon burst, for none were gainers but the drones, and it was soon proclaimed as a law, that "he who will not work shall not eat."

The sure and direct way to competency and even wealth, is the quiet pursuit of a good trade or calling. In no country is this more true than in our own, where there are no legal barriers against the rising of the honest poor; where there are no titles of nobility, no law of primogeniture, no entail of estates. A few glaring exceptions there may be, but, generally speaking, the wealth of this country has been acquired by indefatigable industry: our rich men have been working-men. Or, suppose it to have been their fathers who were the working-men; is my reader the man who would cut off his own sons from all the advantages of what he has earned? It is idle, it is ruinous, in such a country as ours, to set the poor against the rich. For who are the poor? If you mean the drunken, the profligate, the idle.

our gamblers, sharpers, and sturdy beggars ; certainly it is not for their behoof that you would make a division of property. Who are the poor ? If you mean the hard-working tradesman or operative—he does not need your help, and if he is wise he will not ask it ; because he is rapidly passing out of the ranks of the poor into those of the rich. Nor would it be possible to draw a line separating the one class from the other, without placing on each hand those who were rising or falling from either side. Whose interest, then, is it to excite prejudices between rich and poor ? Not that of the industrious ; not that of the poor man who has sons, who may rise to the utmost elevation known among us ; not that of the quiet man who desires security of property for himself and his neighbour ; but only of the grasping and designing rogue, who, like a thief at a fire, wishes to profit by the general confusion.

All these suspicions and heart-burnings between one class and another are evil and disastrous. There can no more be an absolute level in society than in the ocean ; and there is no great class of men which is not necessary to the good of all the rest. The reader of history will remember the famous story of Menenius Agrippa, a Roman consul and general, as related by Livy. The populace were up in arms against the nobles, and had intrenched themselves on one of the hills of the city. Agrippa appeased them by the following fable : “ Once on a time, when each member

of the human body could speak for itself, the members became dissatisfied with the belly; which, said they, does nothing but lie in state, and enjoy the fruit of our labours. They resolved, therefore, upon a strike, and determined to stop the supplies of this luxurious organ. The hands stopped work, and would bring no food to keep him from starving; the mouth would receive no provision; the feet came to a perfect stand-still; in a word, all business was stagnant. There was great perseverance in this combination, until at length a universal emaciation took place, and it was seen that there was no such thing as living without the kind offices of this indolent and aristocratic consumer of victual."

XXXVI.

HOME PLEASURES.

“I crown thee king of intimate delights,
Fireside enjoyments, home-born happiness,
And all the comforts that the lowly roof
Of undisturb'd retirement, and the hours
Of long uninterrupted evening know.”

COWPER.

THE family relation implies community of interest; as there is a common stock, so there are common sorrows and common joys. Put a dozen people together in a house, and let each lead the life of a hermit: this would be no family, even though they might be blood relations. There is more of domestic life even in the steerage of a packet-ship, where like seeks its like, and little congenial groups are formed before the voyage is over. The true glory of home is in the middle region of civilization: it is absent alike from the highest and the lowest. What can be more cheerless than the sullen selfishness of the Indian wigwam; where the relentless savage wraps himself up in indolent dignity, while the squaw and the children are spurned, as unworthy of a look—unless it be the elegant and fashionable household of the prince or noble, where each is independent

of the other, and has his separate equipage and peculiar friends. Compare with this the cottage of the poor labourer, who returns at twilight to be welcomed by every human being, and every domestic animal; who tells over, or hears, all the occurrences of the day, and who feels that there is no interest which he does not share with every one around him.

There is more value than all believe, in the simple maxim, *Let family enjoyments be common to all*. If there are few who deny this, there are still fewer who act upon it in its full extent. Something of it, as I have said, there must be, to make a family at all. We occupy the same house, sit around the same fire, and eat at the same table. It would seem churlish, and almost inhuman, to do otherwise. But I am for carrying the matter much farther, and for knitting more closely together those who cluster around the same hearth; believing that every influence is evil which severs father from child, and brother from brother. The morsel that is eaten alone becomes sooner or later a bitter morsel.

Members of the same household should feel that they are dependent on one another, and should be as free to ask, as ready to give, assistance. Each should rise in the morning with the impression, that no duty of the day is more urgent than to make every individual happy, with whom he is brought into contact. And this contact should be sought, not shunned. It is a bad sign, when

members of the same household are shy of one another. I do not, of course, allude here to those horrid instances of unnatural, brutal temper, where persons of the same blood, daily gathered around the same board, refuse to speak to one another: malice and envy must rankle deeply where this can be the case. I refer to a more common fault, which sometimes exists where there is a degree of real affection, but where the members of a family have separate pursuits and separate pleasures. The hasty morning meal is swallowed with little intercourse. When it is done, each hurries to his or her peculiar line of employment. The mother is busy in the kitchen, the father in the shop, the sons go their several ways. This might do well enough, if it were confined to business, but it becomes the habit of the hours of leisure. The father has his evenings abroad; the sons are seldom within doors till a late hour, and too often, she who most needs the cheering influences of the family circle, the mother, is left to patch or darn by a dim candle, with the cradle moving at her feet, during those hours in which her daughters are laughing or singing among their young company. All this is highly undesirable. The evenings of the industrious family may be, and ought to be, delightful seasons of joint satisfactions. If we must have evening parties of friends, let there be a proper mingling of sexes and ages. The presence of the old may to a degree moderate the mirth of the

young, but in the same proportion the aged will be enlivened. This parcelling and assorting of society, like labelled packages in a shop, is becoming too common, and in my judgment injurious. The young folks must be all together; and the children must be all together; and if matters go on thus, we may live to see parties of graybeards and parties of sucklings. No! wherever it is possible, let the family chain be kept bright and whole. In the houses of the industrious, it is surely broken often enough by separation at work during the day.

Instead of thus living apart, which engenders selfishness and moroseness, I love to see the members of families flowing together, like congenial drops. There are some houses in which no one makes a confidant of another: if one would learn the secret of his brother, he must go abroad for it. This is unnatural, and wholly evil; incompatible with the frankness of simple love. Show me the father often walking with his sons, and these sons often with one another, not in business merely, but in sports; and I shall think I see a virtuous and happy household.

There is one particular in which the principle I have laid down may have a very important application. I mean the case of mental improvement. The rule should here be, so far as possible, let the pursuit of knowledge in every family be a joint pursuit. For many reasons this is desirable in every house, but it is almost indispen-

sable in the house of the working-man. It wakes up the spirit of improvement; it saves time and expense, and it gives tenfold zest to the refreshments of leisure. To take one of the simplest instances, I would, in two words, say to every working-man, *Read aloud*. If the book is borrowed, this is often the only way in which every one can get his share. If the family is very busy,—and the female members of all industrious families are as much so in the evening as in the day—the reading of one will be as good as the reading of all, and while one reads, a dozen may knit or sew. There are many persons who enjoy much more and retain much better what is read to them than what they read themselves: to the reader himself, there is a great difference in favour of reading aloud, as it regards the impression on his own mind. The members of the circle may take turns, and thus each will have a chance of learning, what so few really attain, the art of correct and agreeable reading. Occasion is thus offered for questions, remarks, and general discourse; and it is almost impossible for conversation to flag, where this practice is pursued. With this method, the younger members of a family may be saved in a good degree from the perusal of frivolous and hurtful books; and, if a little foresight be used, a regular course of solid or elegant instruction might thus be constantly going forward, even in the humblest family.

But the moral and social effects of such a prac-

tice are not less to be regarded. Evenings thus spent will never be forgotten. Their influence will be daily felt in making every member of the circle more necessary to all the rest. There will be an attractive charm in these little fireside associations which will hold the sons and daughters back from much of the wandering which is common. It will be a cheap, wholesome, safe enjoyment, and it will be all this, *at home*.

The gains of an affectionate family ought to be shared and equalized; the remark is true of all degrees and kinds of learning. Study has a tendency to drive men to solitude, and solitude begets selfishness, whim, and moroseness. There are some households in which only one person is learned; this one, however amiable, has, perhaps, never thought of sharing his acquisitions with a brother or a sister. How seldom do men communicate what they have learned to their female relations: or, as a man once said in my hearing, "Who tells news to his wife?" And yet how easy would it be, by dropping a word here, and a word there, for even a philosopher to convey the chief results of his inquiries to those whom he meets at every meal. I have been sometimes surprised to see fathers, who had made great attainments, and who, therefore, knew the value of knowledge, abstaining from all intercourse with their sons, upon the points which were nearest their own hearts. In families where the reverse of this is true, that is, where the pursuits of the

house have been a joint business, it is common to see a succession of persons eminent in the same line. Thus, among linguists, the Buxtorfs; among painters the Vernets and the Peales; among musicians, the Garcias; in literature, the Edgeworths, the Taylors, and the Wirts.

There are some pleasures which, in their very nature, are social; these may be used to give a charm to the working-man's home. This is more true of nothing than of music. Harmony implies a concurrence of parts, and I have seen families so trained, that every individual had his allotted part or instrument. Let the thing, however, be conducted by some rule. If proper pains be taken with children, while they are yet young, they may all be taught to sing. Where circumstances favour it, instrumental music may be added. It is somewhat unfortunate that American women practise almost entirely upon the more expensive instruments; and it is not every man who can or ought to give two hundred and fifty dollars for a piano-forte. In countries where the guitar is a common accompaniment, it is within the reach of the poorest. There may be lovely music, however without any instrument. The most exquisite music in the world, I mean that of the pope's Sistine Chapel, is known to be such. There is great room for selection, however, both as to music and words. It is the height of folly to buy every new thing which comes from the music-sellers. So far as words are concerned, a

full half of what they publish is nonsense, or worse ; and I have blushed to see a young lady turning over what she very properly called her "*loose music.*" Those persons, therefore, deserve our thanks, who from time to time are publishing in a cheap form such secular music as is proper for families. I here refer chiefly to such works as Kingsley's Social Choir, Mason's Odeon, and the Boston Glee Book.

But, after all, and without any reference to religion, the best music is sacred music. It is on this that the greatest masters have laid out their strength ; it is this which most suits the chorus of many voices. Secular pieces, as commonly published, are intended to be sung by few, or by a single voice ; but sacred compositions admit of the strength of a whole company. And it is truly delightful to drop into one of those families where the evenings are sometimes spent in this way. There is the eldest daughter at the piano-forte, accompanied by the eldest son upon the violin. Another son and two daughters lead off vocally, with the principal melody, while a neighbouring youth plays the tenor, and sings the same part. The old gentleman in spectacles labours at his violoncello, and two or three flutes come in modestly to complete the orchestra ; while nieces, nephews, cousins, friends, and, perhaps, suitors, fill up the sounding chorus with right good will. This is, indeed, something more than a mere family meeting, but it is what grows out of it ;

and when the evening ends, and some little refreshments have gone around, the transition is not abrupt from this to the social worship, when all voices join once more in a happy evening hymn.

XXXVII.

THE WORKING-MAN'S EVENINGS AT HOME

“O, evenings worthy of the gods! exclaimed
The Sabine bard. O evenings, I reply,
More to be prized and coveted than yours,
As more illumined, and with nobler truths,
That I, and mine, and those we love, enjoy.”

COWPER.

THERE are no portions of the working-man's life in which a more constant series of innocent satisfactions is offered to him, than his evenings. This is true of those at least whose trades do not encroach upon the night. When labour is over, there is an opening for domestic pleasures which no wise man will ever neglect.

My neighbour BOSWELL has a high sense of these enjoyments, and makes the most of them. Except when some public meeting calls him abroad, you are as sure to find him at home in the evening, as at work in the day. Sometimes, indeed, he accompanies his wife or eldest daughter in a visit, but he never appears at clubs or taverns. “I work hard,” he is accustomed to say, “for my little comforts, and I like to enjoy them unbroken.”

The picture would not be unworthy of the

pencil of a Wilkie : I have it clearly in my mind's eye. The snug and well-closed room is all gay with the blaze of a high wood-fire ; which casts upon the smiling circle a ruddy glow. There is Boswell, in his arm-chair, one hand between the leaves of a book which he has just closed, the other among the auburn locks of a little prattling girl. He gazes into the coals with that air of happy revery, which is so sure a token of a mind at rest. The wife, nearer to the light, is plying the ceaseless needle, and distributing kind words, and kinder glances among the little group. Mary, the eldest daughter, is leaning over a sheet of paper, upon which she has just executed a drawing. George, the eldest son, is most laboriously engaged in the construction of a powder-horn. Two little ones are playing the royal game of Goose ; while one, the least of all, is asleep before the fire, by the dog and the cat, who never fail to occupy the same spot every evening.

Such humble scenes, I am happy to believe, are still presented to view, in thousands of families among the working classes. Need it be added, that they are immeasurably above the sickly heats of those who make pleasure the great object of their pursuit in life ? It is among such influences that religion spreads its balm, and that knowledge sheds its fruits. Rest after toil is always agreeable ; but it is doubly so when enjoyed in such circumstances, in the bosom of a loving family, healthful, instructed, and harmonious. Such uni-

formity is never tedious, nor such quiet ever dull. Every such evening may be remembered in after life with pleasing regrets.

My friend tells me, that it is a refreshment to his mind, during the greatest labours or chagrin of the day, to look forward to his tranquil evening. When work is done, he hastens to wash away the traces of his ruder business, and to make himself as smart as is consistent with frugal plainness. "He who hammers all day," he says, "has a right to be clean at night." This is the rule of his house; and when his sons grow large enough to be out at trades, they will, no doubt, come in every evening as trim and as tidy as they went out.

It is no interruption of such a group for a neighbour to drop in. The circle opens, a seat is drawn up, the sleepers are merrily pushed aside from the rug, the conversation grows lively, news circulates, and joy sparkles in every face. The salver of cakes, or the fruit-basket, or some healthful beverage prepared by "neat-handed" Mary, adds to the substantials of the entertainment. The newspaper, or some pleasant book is read aloud; and when the hour for separation comes, they part with a vastly better state of feeling than that of the greasy creature who has nodded in his moping corner, or the peevish tavern-haunter who comes home late to scold his solitary wife.

It might be interesting to inquire what would be the effect upon the state of society in any village

or town, if every working-man in it could be induced to spend his evenings at home, and in this manner. A reform in this single particular would work wonders. Every one who is admitted to such a scene, feels at once that there is a charm in it. Why, then, are there so many families, where nothing of this kind is known? To give all the reasons might be tedious; but I must mention one or two. First, there must be punctuality, neatness, and thrift in the affairs of housekeeping, to make such a state of things practicable. No man loves to take his seat between two washing-tubs, or beside a fire where lard is simmering, or to stretch his legs over a hearth where almost every spot is occupied by some domestic utensil. Then, there must be a feeling of mutual respect and love, to afford inducement to come together in this way. Further, it is difficult to maintain these happy evening groups without some little sprinkling of knowledge. The house where there are no books is a dull house; the talk is amazingly dull talk. Reading makes pleasant conversation. George always has some good thing to read to Mary; or Mary some useful fact to repeat to George. A little learning in the family is like a little salt in the barrel, it keeps all sound and savoury. And, finally, I feel it incumbent on me to repeat what has been said more than once already, that he who overtasks his days, has no evenings. In our country, thank God, labour need not be immoderate to keep one alive. There

is such a thing as working too much, and thus becoming a mere beast of burden. I could name some men, and more women, who seem to me to be guilty of this error. Consequently, when work is past they are fit for nothing but solid sleep. Such are the men and the women who have no domestic pleasures; no reading, no improvement, no delightful evenings at home.

XXXVIII.

THE WORKING-MAN IN THE COUNTRY.

“As one who long in populous city pent
 Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,
 Forth issuing on a summer’s morn to breathe
 Among the pleasant villages and farms
 Adjoin’d, from each thing met conceives delight,
 The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
 Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound——”

MILTON.

EVERY man, until his taste is completely vitiated, and habit, a second nature, has inverted his native propensities, will experience a satisfaction upon going into the country; and there is a particular zest in the little excursions of the town-bred artisan, who leaves the brick, and mortar, and confined air within, to enjoy the gaiety and freshness of rural environs. These visits have pleasant associations. We connect them with fine weather, clean clothes, holidays, and good company; and it is not unlikely that much of the beauty of the country is merely an emanation from our own cheerfulness. Yet after every deduction on this score, we shall all say with the poet,

“God made the country, but man made the town!”

It is not wonderful, therefore, that many of our working-men, as soon as they are able, take their families into the country, either for the summer, or as a permanent residence. A large proportion of the snug little farms around our great towns, are tilled by mechanics, some of whom have retired from trade, while others still continue in business, and use these as their places of retreat. This tendency to the country seems to be on the increase, and I am persuaded it augurs well for the future respectability of the whole class. There are few mechanics in our land who may not look forward to the possession and occupancy of a few acres; and the expectation is a very cheering one to those who have to ply their sedentary tasks, year after year, in the same unventilated shops or lofts. There is a feeling of independence in surveying one's own grounds, however small in extent; there is a perpetual gratification of natural taste in the sights, sounds, and odours of the country; but there are more substantial benefits. No device for the prevention of disease or the restoration of health, is comparable to that of moderate agricultural labour. The fresh air, the exhalation of newly opened furrows, the morning ride, the succession of vegetables and fruits, the continual variety of employments, the intervals of absolute rest, and the placid ease of mind, concur to keep the animal powers in their most healthful play. I scarcely know which season most to covet: spring is balmy and full of

promise ; summer affords gorgeous flowers and sunny harvest ; autumn comes laden with fruits ; and even winter brings days of healthful labour and evenings of cheerfulness and improvement by the ample fire-place.

There is no situation in which children may be brought up in greater security from the temptations of a wicked world. They must, indeed, become somewhat restive ; they may, perhaps, be bashful, and will fail of having that precocious assurance, and almost pertness, which one observes in too many city lads. But from how many moral defilements are they protected ! Having had some trial of both situations in my earlier days, I do not hesitate a moment to say, that the temptations of boyhood are far less in a farm than in any other condition in life. Then we should take into the reckoning the strength, and agility, and manliness which are fostered in a country life. The youthful limbs are developed, and the constitution made robust by labour, sport, and exposure. Sometimes the little farmer strains the young horse across the meadow, or with his faithful dogs traverses the wood, and climbs high to dislodge the squirrel or the raccoon from the slender hickory. Or he dashes into the rapid stream, or rows his boat, or drives his herd into distant pastures, regardless of rains and snows, which would put in jeopardy the lives of more effeminate boys. Certainly the solids of physical education are best secured in the country.

My old neighbour, HENRY HOPE, is an instance of the good effect of a timely retreat into the country. After working many years at the hatter's trade, he began to show signs of primitive decay. He had contracted a stoop in the shoulders, and his complexion was of a dirty yellow. Without entirely giving up his business, he invested some of his savings in a little property four miles out of town. Every year found him more and more of a farmer, until last spring he sold out his whole mechanical establishment, and betook himself to the green fields. I lately visited him, and was entertained with the complacency of his air, as he took me over his grounds. "There," said he, "are my stacks of wheat; not more, perhaps, than six hundred bushels; but then *my own*, in every sense. There, on the right, you see I am putting up a new barn, and cover for my cattle. That spring-house of white stone is as cool as winter; the clear water trickles over the brick floor at all seasons. Near by, you may see my meadow, with the brook running through the midst of it. The double row of willows is to protect a causeway I have been making through that newly-drained swamp. But, come, I must not let you go till I have showed you my orchard, and explained my plans of grafting." So he ran on, descanting now on his stock, now on his poultry, exhibiting improved ploughs, and young hedges, until I was almost persuaded to turn farmer myself.

It is more than eighteen centuries since a Latin poet described, with enthusiasm, the lot of the husbandman :

“O happy, if he knew his happy state,
The swain who, free from business and debate,
Receives the easy food from nature’s hand,
And just returns of cultivated land.
Unvex’d with quarrels, undisturb’d with noise,
The country king his peaceful realm enjoys—
Cool grots, and living lakes, the flowing pride
Of meads, and streams that through the valley glide,
And shady groves that easy sleep invite,
And, after toilsome days, a soft repose at night.”*

A country where agriculture is the great pursuit, is always a country advancing in civilization. Our own land still spreads out before the enterprising young man so many millions of untilled acres, that it would seem to be a plain indication of Providence, that for some time to come we should be an agricultural people. There can be no serious comparison between the health, physical and moral, of men in a thriving, rural district, and any equal number pent up in manufacturing towns. In order to succeed in husbandry, great farms are by no means necessary. It has grown into a proverb, that men grow poor on large farms, and rich on small ones. But if a man wishes to do these things upon the widest scale, the West is all open before him, and he may sit down among thousands of acres.

* Virgil.

XXXIX.

THE WORKING-MAN'S SATURDAY EVENING.

“Come, evening, once again, season of peace;
Return, sweet evening, and continue long.
Methinks I see thee in the streaky west,
With matron step slow moving, while the night
Treads on thy sweeping train! one hand employ'd
In letting fall the curtain of repose
On bird and beast, the other charged for man
With sweet oblivion of the cares of day.”

COWPER.

No one familiar with the aspect of towns inhabited by artisans, needs to be informed that the close of the week is marked by very striking peculiarities. As the ponderous engine of human labour slackens its revolutions, and at length stands still, and gentle rest begins to spread her wing over the haunts of toil, there is at once an addition made to the happiness of man, which no enthusiasm can well overvalue. In a few moments we may apply to the great capital or manufacturing town, the expressive verse from Wordsworth's famous sonnet on London Bridge.

“And all that mighty heart is lying still!”

The forge and the smithy are ceasing to smoke. The mighty arms and shafts moved by steam, are dropping into repose. The quick report of millions of manual utensils has terminated. Jaded animals, bowing their necks, are set free from the yoke; while innumerable sons and daughters of toil, released from the necessity of further work, are ready for rest or pleasure, for improvement or vice. The thought is pleasing. As I survey the crowded city, and allow my imagination to picture the details of the scene, I behold a thousand delightful images of domestic comfort.

Now, according to an extensively prevalent usage, the well-earned reward of labour is received. Now the anxieties of the tedious week are suspended. Families, separated during the preceding days, come together, better prepared than at other times to aid one another, and to enjoy one another's company. One unbroken day between two nights of unaccustomed repose, is a golden prize in expectation. The meeting of parents, brothers, sisters, children, sometimes of husband and wife, who have been kept apart by the stress of labour, is not without some points which deserve the poetic touch of a Crabbe or an Elliot. It is, with the virtuous, a season of hallowed affections.

Happy is that working-man who, when, at the week's end, he throws off, in the bath, the soils

of labour, can with equal ease lay aside the wrong emotions or evil habits of the same period, and with a clear conscience prepare for the day of rest! Happy is the youth who, when he comes home to greet his aged parents, and the sister of whom he is proud, feels that no tarnish has come over his heart! Happy the blooming girl, however lowly her calling, who enters the humble dwelling with the elastic tread of conscious innocence! Blessed family, where the call to rest is but the signal for the renewal of every kindly affection!

I know that with some, even in early life, the end of the week is the beginning of a frolic. The time when wages are received is apt to be a season of merriment if not of vice. In summer, multitudes, in every sort of hired vehicle, stream forth out of the various avenues of our cities and towns. In winter the streets resound till a late hour with the tread of idlers and debauchees. And in every season, Saturday night fills the taverns, oyster-houses, porter-cellars, and other resorts, with a double allowance of hale fellows. There is a triple consumption of tobacco and strong drink on these occasions. So that there is a dark side to the picture, as there is, indeed, to most pictures of human life. But even here, I find an illustration of some of my favourite positions about the conservative influence of the domestic institution. The worst men, I will con-

tinue to affirm, are those who, either from choice or from necessity, have no home. Perhaps, out of a thousand families gathered after a week's work, there is not one gathered for vicious indulgence. Where youth are vicious, they commonly hate the hearthstone. Saturday evening is a good criterion of the attachment which a young man bears to the virtuous attractions of home. As the guardian angel of the fireside, woman has here a great and hopeful work. I wish I could impress on the wife, the mother, and the sister, the value of their influence in this particular. Make home delightful, and you will work wonders. That wayward youth may, perhaps, be won by sisterly invitation. Spare nothing that is fairly within your power to make it worth his while to spend his Saturday evening with the family. So long as you have this hold upon him, you may almost bid defiance to the attempts of evil companions.

Let it never be forgotten, that we owe all these good influences to religion. There would be no Saturday evening, if there were no Christian Sabbath. In countries where man and beast work seven days in the week, there is nothing which resembles the pleasant scenes to which I have alluded. In such countries there is little of what we mean by home. Who would undertake to explain to a French labourer *the Cotter's Saturday Night*?

And since I have been led to name that exqui-

site production, I cannot leave it without commending it to the attention of every working-man who sets a value on family quiet and contentment. This single effusion would not be bought too dearly at the price of all the other productions of Robert Burns. Though written with special reference to an agricultural population, it presents a scene which might be realized in the household of any good man of whatever calling. The return of the cottager, after his labours, is described with the feeling of one who knew what it was to come home weary from the plough. The return of the sons, and of the daughter, is described in the very dialect of nature; and the entrance of the lover is as arch as it is accurate. The chat, the joke, the supper, are all admirably told; the crowning grace of the poem is the account of the family worship:

“The cheerfu’ supper done, wi’ serious face,
 They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
 The sire turns o’er, wi’ patriarchal grace,
 The big *ha’ Bible*, ance his father’s pride:
 His bonnet reverently is laid aside,
 His lyart haffets* wearing thin an’ bare;
 Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
 He wales a portion with judicious care;
 And, *Let us worship God!* he says, with solemn air.”

The psalm is sung, the chapter is read; the family, led by “the priest-like father,” bows in

* Temples covered with gray locks.

prayer; they separate with affectionate salutations. Well says Burns, whom none will suspect of being a fanatic :

“From scenes like these old Scotia’s grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad :
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
‘An honest man’s the noblest work of God :’
And, certes, in fair virtue’s heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind.”

XL.

THE UNSTABLE WORKING-MAN.

“ A man so various that he seem'd to be
 Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
 Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
 Was every thing by turns, and nothing long.
 But in the course of one revolving moon
 Was chymist, fidler, statesman, and buffoon.”

DRYDEN.

THE character which Dryden gives of the witty and wicked Duke of Buckingham, may, with some little change, be applied to many of us who have no titles of nobility. There is no more common character among our young men, than that of Reuben: *Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel*.* Nor do I know any class of persons in whom it is more unfortunate than in those who earn their living by industry; because it is the very nature of their employment to require patient continuance in one course. No trade can be either learned or practised without regularity and constancy. As I write with a principal reference to the young, I think it right to say here, that if the disease of instability is ever

* Gen. xlix. 4.

cured, it must be in youth ; and the effort is one of the most important which could be suggested.

HARRY VANE is a young man of my neighbourhood. He has good talents and good prospects, and has begun life with a pretty little sum of money from his father's estate. But though he is not yet twenty-three, he has already lived in three houses, and set up two trades. He has very decided opinions to-day, but no one can insure their lasting till to-morrow. When he hears arguments on one side, he leans one way ; when on the other side, he leans the other way. Hence, he is quite at the mercy of his companions ; and being somewhat sensible of this, he tries to make up for strength of belief, by energy of asseveration. Nevertheless, he betrays himself at every step ; for this is one of those things which cannot be hidden. Vane takes up his opinions on trade, politics, and religion, at second-hand. The task of reasoning, he resigns to BRIGGS, the post-master, and BRAG, the apothecary, who are his cronies. He never sits down to think any thing out, and, therefore, he is never long of one mind. For when opinions come lightly, they will go lightly. They are trees without roots, easily transplanted or blown down ; reeds shaken with the wind ; weathercocks turning with every breath. There is scarcely one of Vane's opinions which his neighbours could not alter. His mind takes hold of truth with a paralytic grasp. True, this is sometimes amiable ; but for the purpose of life,

it is even worse than obstinacy : just as granite, however hard, is more useful than friable sandstone. So much for his opinions.

It is just the same with his feelings. Never have I seen an April sky so changeable as his temper. His tears and his laughter, his frowns and his caresses, may be, at any moment, exchanged for one another. He shows this in his attachments. He rushes into new associations, to rush as quickly out of them. I have observed him for a few months together, and ever and anon I find him with new faces. I own it is the same as to his malignant feelings ; he cannot hold spite ; but still, with such fickleness, he never can be a man of strength, either for good or evil.

It is the same with his habits. Vane never walks long enough in any one direction to wear a track. He breaks down in his journey, for want of patience. He is driven out of the road, for want of courage. I should as little expect to find him two successive days in the same state, as to see the moon rise for two nights at the same hour.

I have more serious things to say. Vane is unstable in his principles. By a man of principle, I mean one who acts for reasons, which he can show and defend. What he does, he has before resolved to do. He has made up his mind as to the right and wrong of actions before he is brought to trial. Such a man is not Harry Vane. He lacks the very thing which distinguishes the man of principle, namely, perseverance in a de-

terminated course. On one day he seems quite correct, the next almost dissolute. To-night he plays cards: to-morrow, he will join the temperance society. And this because he has no governing principle.

It was good advice which a father once gave to his boy: "My son, learn to say no." There is as much energy in this short word, as in any expression in human language. But what object is more pitiable, than the poor, pliant young man, who cannot stand out against the gentlest wind of temptation, or resist the sneer or the entreaty of bad companions! I have often thought, therefore, that there is as much greatness as safety, in complying with the caution: "My son, when sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Better far would it be for our youth, if they would barter away a good portion of pompous swagger and braggart imbecility, for the quiet dignity of that firmness which will not yield an inch to the importunity of vice.

Let me return to my subject. I have spoken of the opinions, the feelings, and the habits of Harry Vane. Answerable to these is his universal conduct. He is in every circumstance of his life a poor fickle young man. In labour, in amusement, in friendship, he is still the same. He forgets that what he is becoming now, he will be for life. He is quick, amiable, and generous, but he is unstable, and this gives a sickly hue to his whole constitution. He begins a thousand things; he

begins them with zeal, with enthusiasm, with expectation, perhaps with rapture—but he ends none of them. Vane's life, so far as I can see, is likely to be a series of abandoned enterprises. He may talk big, and play the man; but, like the bells on a fool's cap, his actions betray him at every motion.

I wish every young reader of this page would for a moment lay aside the book, and ask himself how nearly he resembles Harry Vane. There is great room for self-deception here. The evil in question is often allied with some of the gentler traits of character. Arising from a certain softness, it easily couples itself with pity, mildness, benevolence, and even generosity. But do not err; unless you can end your day as you begin it; unless you can begin the same thing a hundred times over; unless you can bid defiance to weariness and sloth; unless you can be for a thousand days what you are the first of them; unless you can bear and forbear, and resist beseechings, and example, and raillery, and neglect, you may, indeed, be an agreeable lady's companion; you may be esteemed in the little circle of your friends; you may be popular among those who bend your flexible will to their own purposes; but you must forever forsake the expectation of being manly, influential, or truly great and useful. Let me dwell a minute or two on this.

Fickleness is usually accompanied by other bad traits. Certain vices grow in clusters. If you

are fickle, I shall expect to find you a superficial reasoner. The unsteady man is frequently—though not always—timid. A measure of irresolution is certainly implied. Resolved purpose cannot be expected in him who is perpetually changing. In the same bed of noxious weeds, springs up indolence in all its forms. As there is a want of self-reliance, there will be a disposition to lean upon others. As there is lack of principle, there will be many violations of duty.

All great works are accomplished by constancy. Perseverance in labour wears away rocks, channels our plains, tunnels our mountains; and this perseverance is produced and insured by uniformity of judgment and of passion. The unstable have no unity of plan. A thousand threads are spun for a little distance, only to be snapped and exchanged for others. Great men of every age whether scholars, statesmen, soldiers, or philanthropists, have been men of decision, of constancy, of single purpose. Such men were Newton, Washington, Watt, and Fulton.

Where fickleness predominates, there will always be a general debility of character. Say that a youth is changeable, and by that word you fix on him a stigma of weakness and meanness. It matters little what is his trade or employment. There are no employments which do not demand uniformity and constancy of effort. Moreover, it is a blemish which cannot be concealed: the world will know it; and this is a matter on which

the world judges aright. Whatever may be the reigning enterprise, the fickle man is thought unfit for it. Are important plans on foot? he is sure to be left out. No one will embark on a vessel without rudder, without anchor, without ballast, without pilot,—which can do nothing but go before the wind. But such is the fickle man. He is unsafe in every emergency, because he may change his mind before the work is even begun; and he is prone to be the slave of other men's opinions. And, by the rebound of public opinion, the unstable man sometimes gains a view of his own weaknesses, and is filled with self-contempt. For, as I have hinted above, he is not necessarily a fool; nay, he may be clever and ingenious; he may have candour and generosity, and every thing except the manly virtues. But, wanting these, and sensible of the great defect, and shocked by the contrast of nobler minds, he shrinks from the view, and often retires from attempting any thing worthy of notice.

There is nothing in which the unstable man meets with more losses than in the affairs of morals and religion. There are many who have begun very well, have entered the Christian course with great alacrity, but have fallen out during the race. If it were as easy to complete as to begin, most of us would do well. Some will, perhaps, read these lines, who have lost all the religious emotions which once possessed their minds, and who are likely to be the victims of instability.

As was said before, if this great error is ever amended, it must be in youth ; and to be amended it must be detected. Some will tell us it is all in natural temperament, or in the organs of the brain ; and it cannot be denied that there are great differences in the constitutions of men : all are not moulded of the same clay. Yet here, as in a thousand similar instances, the pains of education, and especially of self-control, are not in vain. Even a bad constitution may be kept alive and strengthened, which, if let alone, would soon go to ruin.

It is the ruinous mistake of many to suppose that mere talent can insure success without constancy and perseverance. One of the most ingenious men I have ever known, is at the same time the most useless member of society. With abilities which might have made his fortune long ago, he is little above the condition of a pauper. At a very early age he was apprenticed to a cabinet-maker, with whom he served about half his time, and learned the simpler operations. During this time, however, he invented a machine for making sausages, for which he received a handsome sum from a neighbouring butcher. It is hard to say what trade he is of, for he plies almost every sort of handicraft. I lately consulted him about a crazy bathing-tub, but found that he had ceased to be a cooper, and was manufacturing shoemakers' lasts. He has made reeds for weavers, bird-cages, and wire-safes ; he has taken out several patents

for churns, and has even tinkered a little about clocks and watches. But, then, his patents do him no good, for he has not resolution to fulfil his orders, and his occupations are so various that no one knows where to find him. Yet I never met with any who did not grant that this same fellow was one of the greatest mechanical geniuses in our neighbourhood. But mere cleverness, without strength of character, can never make a man respectable, useful, or happy.

XLI.

THE WORKING-MAN'S GOOD WORKS.

“Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.”

POPE.

IT is an unwilling tribute to moral principle, that even the most hardened of our race dislike to be called selfish. It needs little instruction and little philosophy to show a man that he does not live entirely for his own interest; and the slightest experience is sufficient to prove that he who tries to do so offends against his own happiness. The person who cares for nobody but himself, is in every sense a wretch, and so glaring is this wretchedness in the case of the money-slave, that we have borrowed a word of this import from Latin, and call him a miser.

From their earliest years, our children should be taught this simple but invaluable lesson, that *benevolence is bliss*. Do good and be happy. We are most like God, the happiest of all beings, when we are most beneficent. In pursuance of this, I would bring up my child to feel that his cake, or his penny, or his orange was to be shared; that for this purpose it is given; and that he fails

of his pleasure if this end is not attained. I would make it one of his chief rewards to carry aid to the poor, and would give him an early chance of being my almoner. And when fit opportunities occurred, I would take him with me to see for himself the happiness effected by his own little gifts. For it is apt to slip from our thoughts that in moral as well as in intellectual principles and habits, the mind is made by education. Conscience and the affections are almost latent in the savage, or the London thief, or the young slave-trader; and a child bred in the forest would be only above the ourang-outang, in morals as in reason. A difference not so great, yet by no means unimportant, is to be observed in the children of different families, in respect to kindness of feeling and beneficence of action. Let us aim to bring up our little ones to deeds of mercy.

Do we, however, who are parents, teach them by example? Have we any plans for doing good? Are we not quite content to let days roll by, in which we have not conferred a real benefit on any fellow-creature? Is the impression deep in our own minds, that there is a luxury in doing good, and that it is its own reward? Benevolence should be cherished by contemplating the characters of such as have acquired the blessed reputation of philanthropists: though there are thousands who never have the name, because they have modestly shunned the publicity.

Travellers in Herefordshire are still shown the arm-chair of John Kyrle, the original of Pope's "Man of Ross." Of his history not much can be recovered, and this little is preserved entirely by the memorials of his good deeds; for he lives in the recollection of the poor in that neighbourhood. He does not seem to have been remarkable for any thing but his beneficence. As we learn, on good authority, that the celebrated lines of the poet are not exaggerated, we prefer his elegant description to any thing of our own :

"But all our praises why should lords engross ?
 Rise, honest Muse ! and sing the Man of Ross.
 Pleased Vaga echoes through her winding bounds,
 And rapid Severn hoarse applause resounds.
 Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows ?
 Whose seats the weary traveller repose ?
 Who taught that heaven-directed spire to rise ?
 'The MAN OF ROSS,' each lisping babe replies.
 Behold the market-place, with poor o'erspread ;
 The Man of Ross divides the weekly bread ;
 He feeds yon alms-house, neat, but void of state,
 Where age and want sit smiling at the gate ;
 Him portion'd maids, apprenticed orphans bless'd,
 The young who labour, and the old who rest.
 Is any sick ?—the Man of Ross relieves,
 Prescribes, attends, the medicine makes and gives.
 Is there a variance ?—enter but his door,
 Balk'd are the courts, and contest is no more.
 O say, what sums that generous hand supply ?
 What mines, to swell that boundless charity ?
 Of debt and taxes, wife and children clear,
 That man possess'd—five hundred pounds a year.'

In his own particular sphere, and with due allowance made for circumstances, every man who has a little substance and a little leisure, may be a Man of Ross. "The most worthless," it has been said, "have at times, moments in which they wish to rise out of the slough of their passions, and be beneficially employed; and many of the best lose opportunities of effecting much, by neglecting the common materials within their reach and aspiring to what is beyond them." I have known weakly benevolent persons to sigh for occasions of usefulness, when widows and orphans were suffering the extremities of want within a few hundred yards of their dwellings.

I have often stood in amazement at the number of beneficent acts which my friend Joseph Pitson will accomplish, without taking away any thing considerable from his daily labours. He succeeds in this by husbanding his moments, watching for opportunities, and seizing upon them the instant they appear. But it is genuine benevolence which gives him this alacrity. Among a thousand objects presented to his attention, Joseph's eye singles out at a glance that to which he can be useful; if the comparison is not out of place, just as the bird of prey pounces upon its quarry. When, not long since, I spent one or two days together with him in settling the affairs of a deceased friend's estate, I was often called to wonder at the multiplicity of his acts of kindness. On one day in particular, he was perpetually fly-

ing from business to charity, and yet not apparently to the disadvantage of either. When breakfast was over, he had two plates and as many bowls of coffee despatched to the sick father of one of his apprentices. Shortly after, he stole ten minutes to run across the way, to arrange something towards a Temperance meeting in the evening, and to drop three tracts into as many country market-carts. A woman called him out to ask advice about a drunken son, who had been arrested in a riot. Then he had notices to sign as chairman of a committee respecting the improvement of schools. These did not altogether take up more of his time than the filling and smoking of three or four pipes would of my old friend Stith's. While I was at my dinner, Joseph had walked half a mile to see about the indentures of widow Jones's boy, and had his meal into the bargain. In the afternoon he made his wife accomplish almost as much more, and I sat down with him at tea in company with three or four religious friends from a distance, who were sharing his hospitality, and who were to be present at the meeting after dark.

I wish what I am saying might induce the reader of these pages to lay down the book for a moment, and to ask himself these questions: Am I doing any good in the world? What proportion of my gains do I allot to acts of charity? Am I active in giving personally to the relief of those whom I hear to be in distress? Do I take any

pains to seek out such cases? What poor, or otherwise suffering persons, are there in my immediate neighbourhood, to whom I have never extended any relief? A little self-catechising of this sort would not be thrown away, now and then, upon the best of us.

The saying of the wise man is remarkable: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Tithe, and be rich, is the Jewish proverb. "I am verily persuaded," says Gouge, a writer of the seventeenth century, "that there is scarcely any man who gives to the poor proportionably to what God has bestowed on him; but, if he observe the dealings of God's providence toward him, will find the same doubled and redoubled upon him in temporal blessings. I dare challenge all the world to produce one instance (or at least any considerable number of instances) of a merciful man, whose charity has undone him. On the contrary, as the more the living wells are exhausted, the more freely they spring and flow, so the substance of charitable men frequently multiplies in the very distribution: even as the five loaves and few fishes multiplied, while being broken and distributed, and as the widow's oil increased by being poured out"

XLII.

THE WORKING-MAN'S REST.

“O, day most calm, most bright!
The fruit of this, the next world's bud;
Th' endorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a friend, and with his blood;
The couch of time; care's balm and bay:
The week were dark, but for thy light;
Thy torch doth show the way.”

HERBERT.

THERE is no engine which can work forever. There must be intermissions to oil the joints and wheels, and supply the losses by wear and tear. Not even the human frame, the most wonderful and complete of all machines, can do its work without some remission. It is so constituted as to require the supplies of food and sleep, at least once every twenty-four hours. But something more than this is needed. After several days of toil, both the body and the mind ask for respite. It is too much to have all our powers and all our thoughts day after day and month after month bent intensely upon the same object. Either body or mind, or both together, must infallibly break down under such a strain.

Our beneficent Creator has kindly provided for this necessity of nature, by the institution of the Sabbath, which is older than Christianity, and older than the Mosaic law ; having been ordained immediately after the creation. It is set apart as a day of rest, which the name imports ; a day of devotion, of instruction, and of mercy. If it is a mercy to the world at large, it is a seven-fold mercy to the working-man, who cannot possibly thrive without this, or some similar refreshment. The beast of burden sinks under perpetual loads, and the law of the human constitution is just as binding, which enjoins periodical and sufficient rest.

Men may try to brave the authority of heaven ; but they do it to their own great loss, even in a worldly point of view. 'Take one week with another, and the man who works seven days accomplishes no more than he who works six. Careful observers tell us, that they never knew any one to grow rich by Sunday labour.

It is strange that any arguments should be needed in behalf of the Sabbath. Every thing that accompanies it is delightful. The hum, and whirl, and crash of business come to an end. Serene repose broods over the face of nature. Families separated during the week, now come together ; and parents greet their sons and daughters. The very cleanliness which the Sabbath brings with it has a charm. Even the poorest who observe the day, are now in their best ap-

parel; and I am one of those who believe that to be neat and tidy has a decided moral influence. As the tradesman or the mechanic, who has been confined for some days, walks abroad, leading his little ones to the Sunday-school or the church, he feels a complacency which nothing else could produce. If his turn is serious, he will be led to contemplate the Creator in his works; and, especially in the fairer seasons of the year, to rejoice with rejoicing nature.

But it is at church that we discern the greatest advantages of the Sabbath. There is a little community met in their best suit, in their best humour, for the most important business of the week. If it is in the country, the scene is often enchanting. The old church stands on some eminence, surrounded by ancient trees, beneath which are scattered the grassy mounds that mark the resting-place of the dead. Friends are now exchanging kind looks and salutations, who meet at no other time during the week. There is scarcely a dull eye or a lack-lustre face among the groups which crown every knoll of the wide enclosure. So that, long before public worship begins, there is a benign, moral influence at work. How much more pure and genial is the social spirit thus awakened than that which is engendered at wakes, auctions, and town-meetings: and how little real community of feeling would there be in a neighbourhood where there was no such weekly gathering!

But enter the house of God, and catch the impression of the sacred scene. The vision of the poet is realized :

“Fast the church-yard fills ; anon
 Look again, and they are gone ;
 The cluster round the porch, and the folk
 Who sat in the shade of the prior's oak !
 And scarcely have they disappear'd
 Ere the prelusive hymn is heard :—
 With one consent the people rejoice,
 Filling the church with a lofty voice,
 A moment ends the fervent din,
 And all is hush'd without and within.”*

Who can calculate the softening, elevating, hallowing influences of such a service once every week ! Fifty-two Sundays, every year, is this custom spreading its blessed fruits of peace and good order. Consider next the instructions of this sacred season. “Here,” says a popular writer, “on a day devoted to no employment but the gaining of this knowledge, and the performance of those religious duties which unite with it in perfect harmony ; in a place convenient and sacred ; on an occasion infinitely important ; and with the strong power of sympathy to aid and impress ; a thousand persons are taught the best of all knowledge ; the most useful to themselves and the most beneficial to mankind ; for a less sum than must be expended by a twentieth part

* Wordsworth.

of their number in order to obtain the same instruction in any other science. No device of the heathen philosophers, or of modern infidels, greatly as they have boasted of their wisdom, can be compared, as to its usefulness, with this. The Sabbath, particularly, is the only means ever devised of communicating important instruction to the great mass of mankind."

For these reasons the habit of church-going is of great value to every man, and above all price to such as have not received a thorough education. I like to see the head of a family bringing all his household to public worship: children cannot begin too soon to enjoy so great a blessing.

The afternoon and evening of Sunday afford a favourable opportunity for the religious instruction of children and dependants. In the stricter sort of old families this was as regular a thing as the return of the day. There are good occasions also for the reading of the Scriptures and of other good books. Happy is that domestic circle where this has been the habit of every member from his childhood.

What time can be more favourable than this for acts of mercy! From the smallest gains something may be laid by, on the first day of the week, for the poor, or for benevolent institutions. It is really surprising to observe how much more men will give in the course of a year in this way, than by random gifts of large amount.

He who enters at all into the spirit of what I have written, will not need to be warned against

Sunday dinners, visits to public gardens, rides or drives into the country, or any of the varieties of profane dissipation. Sir Matthew Hale is reported to have said, that during a long life he had observed the success of his weeks to turn out well or ill, according as he had observed or neglected the Lord's-day.

XLIII.

THE WORKING-MAN RETIRED FROM BUSINESS.

“O bless'd retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease.”

GOLDSMITH.

AN elderly man once expressed to me his sense of declining life, by saying, “My birth-days begin to come very fast.” The years seem to run round faster as they approach their close; so that it is a common saying among the aged, that time flies much more rapidly than when they were young. Every gray hair, every failing tooth, every wrinkle, and every decay of eyesight, ought to serve as a gentle hint, that we are going down the hill; and yet I believe there is no one whom old age does not take by surprise. There is a fine moral in the little poem of the *Three Warnings*; those of us who begin to be shy of telling our age would do well to read it.

At this period of life, particularly where a man has had some prosperity, it is natural to think of retiring from business. What can be more reasonable than to desist from labour when the ne-

cessity for it is at an end, or to close the journey when the end has been attained? This would be unanswerable, if the only end of labour and occupation was to make money: and though avarice would cling to the last possibility of turning a penny, every man of liberal feeling would be ready to cease when he has got enough, and to leave the field open for younger competitors. But there is a consideration of great importance which is too often left out, in this inquiry: I invite to it the serious attention of all elderly mechanics. After fifteen or twenty years of labour, occupation becomes necessary to one's comfort. This arises from a law of our constitution. Few men can break off a habit of long standing with impunity, unless it be a habit which is injurious in itself.

There is an illusion in most cases of sudden retirement from business of any kind. The veteran, when he lays down his arms, dreams of perfect peace: he finds ennui and satiety. When from ill-health or great infirmity there is no fitness for employment, nothing can be said; but I would warn all working-men against retiring unadvisedly. Charles Lamb's admirable sketch of the "Superannuated Man," is a case in point. At first there will be a feeling of release and exemption, as if a great burden had been thrown off; but afterwards, unless where there are great mental resources, the mind will turn upon itself.

Instances will occur to every observing reader

of men who have become miserable from this very cause. A highly respectable man of my acquaintance, who united the pursuits of agriculture and trade, found himself rich enough at threescore to give up both employments. He retired to a snug little retreat to spend the remainder of his days in repose. But he soon began to miss the excitement of regular business. His hours were now empty alike of work and pleasure, and as dull as a boy's solitary holiday. He longed for the counter and the plough. At length he fell into a most deplorable melancholy, which lasted for some years. If there is the slightest tendency to drink, it is apt to manifest itself at this critical season. Where the consequences are not so serious, how often do we see the retired mechanic gloomily revisiting his old haunts, pacing about the street with a disconsolate air, and envying every whistling apprentice that he meets. The following instance is given by Dr. Johnson: "An eminent tallow-chandler in London, who had acquired a considerable fortune, gave up the trade in favour of his foreman, and went to live at a country-house near town. He soon grew weary, and paid frequent visits to his old shop, where he desired they might let him know their *melting-days*, and he would come and assist them; which he accordingly did. Here was a man to whom the most disgusting circumstances in the business to which he had been used was a relief from idleness."

This change should be made, if possible, by

slow degrees, and the reins of business should not be altogether abandoned until several experiments shall have been made. Even aged and infirm men may find great pleasure in some of the lighter employments of their trade, or in a general superintendence.

It is in such cases as this that a little learning, and a taste for books, come admirably into play. To have nothing to do is the worst part of solitary confinement in jails: give the convict books, and he would soon become interested and comfortable. Give the old working-man his little library, and he will have a solace for his declining years.

But there is another greater and more certain preventive of stupor and listlessness. Where there is a truly religious temper, old age is delightful. It is natural and seemly that old age should

“Walk thoughtful on the silent, solemn shore
Of that vast ocean it must sail so soon.”

The consolations of the gospel will cast broad sunshine over the whole prospect. The glow of Christian love will soften every asperity, and mellow those dispositions which old age is apt to sour. And if the hoary man can take his staff, and, with benignant affection, walk about among children, grand-children, old friends, and neigh-

bours, rousing them by his advice, instructing them by his example, and aiding them by his charities, he may do more good, and consequently enjoy more happiness in the close of his life than in all the vigour of his youth and manhood.

XLIV.

THE WORKING-MAN IN OLD AGE.

"My morning walks I now could bear to lose,
 And bless'd the shower that gave me not to choose :
 In fact, I felt a languor stealing on ;
 The active arm, the agile hand were gone ;
 Small daily actions into habits grew,
 And new dislikes to forms and fashions new :
 I loved my trees in order to dispose,
 I number'd peaches, look'd how stocks arose,
 Told the same story oft—in short, began to prose."

CRABBE.

IN a long sitting by our fireside, the other evening, I had the whole subject of old age discussed between UNCLE BENJAMIN and Mr. APPLETREE ; and some of the results I am disposed to set down, without trying, however, to keep up the form of dialogue, or to trace every remark to the respective speakers. Nevertheless, the reader may rest assured, that whatever is matter of daily observation, is from uncle Benjamin, and whatever smacks of ancient times, from the schoolmaster.

Old age takes men by surprise : this has been long observed. "No one," says Pliny, "ever says, 'the storks are coming,' or, 'they are going ;' but always, 'they have come,' or, 'they have

gone ;' for they both come and go secretly, and by night." So it is with old age: we do not perceive its approach. At length, however, the head becomes cold from its baldness; the last stump forsakes the gums; it is a labour to bend the joints, to mount a horse, or to go up stairs; there is a drumming in the ears, and the eyes almost refuse the aid of useless glasses. And then comes the sense of decline; it is well called the winter of the year. "When men wish for old age," says St. Augustin, "what do they desire but a long disease?"

A life of moderate labour, if the habits are good in other respects, is one of the best securities for a mild old age. But, in point of fact, working-men very seldom think it necessary to observe caution in this particular during their strong days, and they pay the penalty at the close of life, in stiff joints, a crooked back, and many pains and infirmities which need not be mentioned. Disease and sorrow sometimes sour the temper, and the old man becomes complaining, peevish, and moody. The grasshopper becomes a burden, and fears increase; he carries caution to the extreme of timidity, and has a distressing irresolution about the smallest concerns. These evils are of course greatly aggravated if he is poor, widowed, and childless. In such a case, unless the blessings of religion come in to cheer the prospect, one might almost see the saying of Diogenes made true, that a poor old man is the most wretched

of mortals. And though I would not say a word to inculcate a miserly temper, it is certainly right to remind our young men, that a youth of prodigality will have an old age of want. After a life even of laborious pursuits, we sometimes see old people in this melancholy condition.

“Nor yet can time itself obtain for these
 Life’s latest comforts, due respect and ease;
 For yonder see that hoary swain, whose age
 Can with no cares except its own engage;
 Who, propp’d on that rude staff, looks up to see
 The bare arms broken from the withering tree,
 On which, a boy, he climb’d the loftiest bough,
 Then his first joy, but his sad emblem now.”

This is far from being true of every old man. Indeed, where there have been habits of frugality, foresight, temperance, and religion, old age is often like a summer’s evening after a day of toil. Especially may it be so to one who has not desisted prematurely from active labours, and who looks back upon a long life filled with industrious perseverance and useful deeds. In one of the most pleasing chapters of Paley’s Natural Theology, that benevolent philosopher cites the case of comfortable old age as remarkably illustrating the goodness of the Deity. “It is not for youth alone, that the great Parent of creation hath provided. Happiness is found with the purring cat, no less than with the playful kitten; in the arm-chair of dozing age, as well as in either the

sprightliness of the dance, or the animation of the chase. To novelty, to acuteness of sensation, to hope, to ardour of pursuit, succeeds what is, in no inconsiderable degree, an equivalent for them all, 'perception of ease.' Herein is the exact difference between the young and the old. The young are not happy, but when enjoying pleasure; the old are happy when free from pain. And this constitution suits with the degree of animal power which they respectively possess. The vigour of youth was to be stimulated to action by impatience of rest; whilst, to the imbecility of age, quietness and repose become positive gratifications. In one important respect the advantage is with the old. A state of ease is, generally speaking, more attainable than a state of pleasure. I am far, even as an observer of human life, from thinking that youth is its happiest season, much less the only happy one: as a Christian, I am willing to believe that there is a great deal of truth in the following representation, given by a very pious writer, as well as excellent man:* 'To the intelligent and virtuous, old age presents a scene of tranquil enjoyments, of obedient appetites, of well-regulated affections, of maturity in knowledge, and of calm preparation for immortality.' "

Among the humbler circles of society, in dwellings seldom entered by the rich or gay, I have seen beautiful examples of this. What sight is

* Father's Instructions, by Dr. Percival.

more lovely, than that of a gray-haired father, seated by the glowing hearth, surrounded by children and grand-children, who hang upon his instructions, and fly to anticipate his every want! "Children's children," says Solomon, "are the crown of old men." Where the fifth commandment has been inculcated and obeyed, old age derives many indescribable comforts from the affectionate respect of youth. Among the Chinese, it is well known that filial reverence is carried to a degree little short of religious worship. To speak carelessly to parents, is with them a heinous crime; to raise the hand against them, a capital one. Providence sometimes repays men in their own coin. Those who have been undutiful sons, are often made to smart as neglected parents. There are few spectacles more disgraceful than that of aged parents surrounded by idle sons, living upon their little remaining substance, and clinging to them, not to support them, but, like parasitical plants, to suck the last juices from their wasted trunks. It should be the pride and glory of youth, so far as practicable, to remove every annoyance from the old age of those who watched over their helpless childhood. Let parents see to it, that they are bringing up their children in such habits as are likely to make them a stay and prop to their declining years.

Next to the affection of his own children, the old man will rank among his prerogatives the respect of society. There is something in the

sight of any old man, even if he is a sober beggar, which awakes my respect. In some parts of the country it is, or was, the custom to give a respectful salutation to every aged person, whether rich or poor, known or unknown. It is a good custom, and speaks well for the social state of the land. I have been told of a gentleman who never allowed himself to speak to an aged person without being uncovered. Such was the Mosaic law: "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord."* The principles of the ancient Lacedemonians were very strict in this particular, and such as may put some Christians to the blush. Their youth were daily taught to reverence old age, and to give the proofs of it on every suitable occasion, by making way for them, yielding the best places, saluting them in the street, and showing them honour in public assemblies. They were commanded to receive the instructions and reproofs of the aged with the utmost submission. In consequence of this, a Spartan was known wherever he went, and was considered as disgracing his country if he behaved otherwise. Cicero tells us of Lysander, that he used to say that Sparta was the place for a man to grow old in. The story is well known, as related by Plutarch, of the old man of Athens, at the theatre. Coming in late, he found all the seats occupied His

* Lev. xix. 32.

young countrymen, by whom he passed, kept their seats, but when he came near the place where the Spartan ambassadors and their suite were sitting, they all instantly rose, and seated him in the midst of them; upon which the house resounded with the applause of the Athenians. The old man quietly said, "The Athenians know what is right, but the Spartans practise it." If there is any form of self-complacency which is pardonable, it is that of the happy old man, who makes his circuit among the places of business, where he was once among the busiest, and receives with a satisfied smile the regard of all around him. He seats himself in the shops, cracks his old jokes, repeats his old stories, lectures the boys, and sometimes breaks forth into a half-comic scolding of every thing pertaining to modern times.

I look upon it as one of the great advantages of age, that it can freely give advice. This is what the rest of us cannot do so well. But who will be offended with the counsels, or even the rebukes of a venerable father, leaning on his staff, and shaking with that infirmity which is but the beginning of death? The words and the example of old men are so effective, that I have sometimes thought the responsibility of this season of life was not sufficiently felt. A man may do more good in this way after he is sixty, than in all his foregoing life. But it is to be done, not sourly, grimly, complainingly, or morosely, but with that

gentleness which may show that it arises from true benevolence.

It was observed by the ancients, that the besetting sin of old age is avarice. Strange, that the less one needs, the more he should desire! Yet thus it is: and thus it will ever be, unless some better principles be infused in earlier life; the ruling passion will be strong even in death. In the following celebrated verses of Pope, it is now well known that the poet merely repeated the very words used on his death-bed by Sir William Bateman:

“ ‘I give, and I devise’ (old Euclio said,
And sigh’d) ‘my lands and tenements to Ned.’
Your money, sir? ‘My money, sir? what, all?
Why,—if I must—(then wept) I give it Paul.’
The manor, sir? ‘The manor! hold,’ he cried,
‘Not that,—I cannot part with that’—and died.”

Thus, I repeat it, old age will be liable to the madness of avarice, unless religious principle prevent; and even if religion has been neglected in former years, it should demand attention now, “When a ship is leaking,” says Seneca, “we may stop a single leak, or even two or three; but when all the timbers are going to pieces, our efforts are of no avail.” So in the human body, when old age shows that the fabric is breaking down, the soul ought to be looking out for a better habitation. Alas! few grow wise late in life. The most pleasing instances of old age are those

of persons who have attended to the best things in youth. Such there are, and they are among the greatest ornaments of religion. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." The Christian old man shows fruit even in winter. Instead of being querulous, he is contented, hopeful, rejoicing. The natural sourness of declining years has been ripened into a delightful mellowness of temper, by the graces of religion. May such be the old age of the reader!

XLV.

CONCLUSION.

“’Tis the only discipline we are born for ;
All studies else are but as circular lines,
And death the centre where they must all meet.”

MASSINGER.

IN the foregoing essays I have touched upon a great variety of subjects, and have passed “from grave to gay,” from entertainment to instruction. There are many matters quite as important which must be left unattempted. But I cannot bring myself to close the volume without a word of counsel upon what is still more momentous than any to which I have alluded. Whatever our calling in life may be, it must come to an end ; and however our paths may differ, they will all meet in the same termination. At death we shall be stripped of all our petty distinctions, and despoiled of all our worldly gains.

He must be a very stupid or a very heedless man, who never asks himself what are the probabilities of his condition after death. A prosperous life here does not secure a prosperous life hereafter. The very heathen may rebuke us for our carelessness. Even the deist, if he believes

in the immortality of the soul, must have some solicitude about the nature of that immortality. Some persuade themselves that all men will certainly be happy after death. This is a convenient doctrine for all who wish to enjoy vicious pleasures; but there is too much at stake for any man to adopt it without great consideration, and such arguments as defy all contradiction. It is against our rational feelings of justice, the common judgment of all ages, and the plain meaning of the Bible.

If there is, then, a risk of losing one's soul, can a reasonable man leave the matter unsettled? It has often filled me with astonishment to see men of the greatest foresight and discretion in worldly affairs, so ruinously careless in these. They would not consent to pay a small sum of money without taking a receipt; or to live in a house without insurance; or to lend money without security; knowing that even where neighbours are honest, life is uncertain. But they will hazard their everlasting interests upon the merest chance. No one can predict what a day may bring forth. Death takes most of its victims by surprise. Yet the multitude live from year to year without any attempt at preparation.

The undue value set upon wealth and temporal prosperity, is one great cause of this recklessness. All through life men are in chase of that which perishes as they grasp it. Give them all that their most eager wishes could demand, and you

do not secure them for eternity. But there is a good part which cannot be taken away from them.

No considerate man can reflect on his life, or examine his heart without acknowledging that he is a sinner against God. The whole tenor of the Scriptures speaks the same truth. How am I to escape the punishment due to my sin? This is the great question, on which every one ought to have some settled determination. He is not a wise man, who lies down at night without some satisfactory hope that sudden death would not ruin his happiness.

The great truths of the Christian religion lie within a small compass. There is an agreement among all the conflicting sects of evangelical Christians as to a few cardinal points. They are such as these : that by nature men are children of wrath ; that God will punish the impenitent ; that we must be born again ; that without faith it is impossible to please God ; that he who believeth shall be saved, and he who believes not will be condemned. Further, the faith which saves us, regards chiefly the Lord Jesus Christ ; that he is the Son of God ; that he became man for our salvation ; that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree ; that he rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven ; and that we are justified by faith in him. He who believes thus, and manifests this belief by corresponding works, is a true Christian.

There is reason to think that infidelity is on

the wane in our country. About the time of the French revolution, the impious falsehoods of Voltaire were making havoc among our youth. This arch-infidel once predicted that in twenty years the Christian religion would be no more! Those who were deceived by him found nothing but disappointment and wretchedness. Learned, witty, and applauded as he was, he had less real wisdom than the poorest and most ignorant Christian widow.

“She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
Has little understanding, and no wit;
Receives no praise; but though her lot be such,
Toilsome and indigent, she renders much;
Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
And in that charter reads with sparkling eyes
Her title to a treasure in the skies.
O happy peasant! O unhappy bard!
His the mere tinsel, hers the rich reward;
He praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come,
She never heard of half a mile from home:
He, lost in errors, his vain heart prefers,
She, safe in the simplicity of hers.”

THE END.

THE
AMERICAN MECHANIC
AND
WORKING-MAN.

BY JAMES W. ALEXANDER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
WILLIAM S. MARTIEN.

518

ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year
1847, by WILLIAM S. MARTIEN, in the Clerk's Office
of the District Court for the Eastern District of Penn-
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THE
AMERICAN MECHANIC.

I.

THE MECHANIC'S PLEASURES.

OURS is not the country where one may sneer at the "mechanic." Demagogues know this; and the same agitators who would spurn the "unwashed artificer," if met in some old despotic realm, find it to be their true policy to flatter and cajole him here. This is no part of *my* business. I respect honest labour, though it be in the black man who saws my wood; and, so far as I can learn, my ancestors have been working men so long that "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." Though the motto of William of Wickham is no longer good English, it is good sense still—MANNERS MAKETH MAN. Wherever the demeanour and life of a man are good, let me get as near to him as he will allow, that I may

take his hand, though it be as black and hardened as his anvil.

I am ready to maintain that the American mechanic has no reason to envy any man on earth. "Happy, happy men!" as an old poet says, "if they could appreciate their own felicity!"

Has the mechanic no *pleasures*? Let us see: and in order to see better, let me use some illustrations. There is a shop near my lodgings; and I never yet saw the shop in which there was not something to be learned. In this one there is evidence enough that working men may have cheap and abundant pleasures. Without going so far as to state, what I believe firmly, that to the industrious man *labour is pleasure*, I beg 'eave to introduce ARTHUR KIP. This young man is a plain cooper, and lives on the extremity of a street which I pass daily. He is in his shop as early as his earliest neighbour, yet I sometimes see him busy a good half hour before he is in his shop. What is Arthur about in the grey of the morning? I will tell you. He has been setting out rows of elms around the whole border of his little lot. For you must know that he is content to live in a very uncomfortable house, in order to forward his business and prepare his grounds, so as to "make a fair start," as he calls it. He has told me that he was induced to do

this by a maxim of an ancient king : “ Prepare thy work *without*, and make it fit for thyself in the field, and *afterwards build thy house.*” It does one good to see Arthur among his trees ; he sings cheerily over his spade and hatchet, long before the sun is up. “ These saplings,” says he, “ will be noble branching trees over the heads of my children ; and if little Tom should be a rich man thirty years hence, he will have a grove which all the money of the aristocrats in England could not cause to spring up.” In this he agreed well with the laird of Dumbiedikes, who is known to have said on his death-bed to his son and heir : “ Jock, when ye hae naething else to do, ye may be aye sticking in a tree ; *it will be growing, Jock, when ye’re sleeping.*”

Arthur has a garden also. His rule is, “ first for *use* ; next for *show.*” So he has most of his ground in substantial vegetables for the table ; but a very goodly portion, I assure you, in choice flowers. Why should he not ? God has given the poor man these gems of the earth with a bounteous profusion ; and Ellen Kip and little Tom will love Arthur and one another all the better for dwelling among the lustre and fragrance of tulips and violets.

In these bright spring evenings, I take a walk about the time that this little household comes

together after work. No tavern has yet become Ellen's rival; her husband spends not only his nights, but his evenings, *at home*. Or, if he goes abroad, it is in the old-fashioned way: I mean he takes his wife and his boy along. At this hour I am always sure of witnessing another of the mechanic's pleasures. Arthur and Ellen are natives of a state where young folks are taught to sing: they have already begun to bring up little Tom in the same way. They carry a tune in several parts; for Arthur is no mean performer on the violin, and Ellen sings a soprano part to her husband's base. The neighbours are beginning to find their way out, since the spring weather has unclosed doors and windows, and there are some signs of a little musical association.

Some of the best musical talent in America is among our mechanics; and it is sad that they are so slow to discover the exquisite satisfaction which they might derive from this innocent recreation. It soothes the troubled mind; it breaks the thread of vexing thoughts; it prepares the affections for every good impression; it affords a healthful excitement; it knits families together by gentlest bands; and it makes a paradise of *home*.

What mechanic is there who may not command these pleasures? What pleasures of the

bar-room, the circus, the gaming-table, the theatre, are equal to these in purity and genuine content? I am sure I shall have the right answer—if not from mechanics, at least from their wives. But for fear of being prolix, I reserve some other pleasures for a future paper.

II.

WHAT WILL YOU HAVE?

AFTER a day's work of calculation and copying, I was under the mortifying necessity of waiting an hour in the tap-room of a low tavern, to secure the services of a mail-guard, who was to carry a parcel for my employers. Amidst the smoke, the spitting, and the clatter of a crowd of inn-haunters, I could not but find some subjects for reflection.

The presiding genius of the bar was a bloated, carbuncled, whiskered young man, whom I had long known as the abandoned son of a deceased friend. I sighed and was silent. Ever and anon as one after another, or squads of two, three or more, approached his shrine, to receive and empty their glasses, and deposit their sixpences, I heard the short, peremptory formula of the Bacchanal minister—" *What will you have?—brandy? gin? punch? What will you have?*" And the victims severally made their bids, for a smaller, a cocktail, a sling, or a julep, as the case might be. The constant repetition of "the form

in that case made and provided," set me upon a drowsy meditation on the pregnant question *What will you have?* "Methinks I can answer the question," said I to myself, as I cast a glance around the murky apartment. And first to the young shoemaker, who, with a pair of newly finished boots, is asking for "grog." What will you have? Young man, you will soon have *an empty pocket*.

There is a trembling, ragged man, with livid spots under the eyes. He is a machine-maker, and has lodgings in the house. What will you have? Ah! the bar-keeper knows without an answer: he takes gin and water. Poor man! I also know what you will have. Already you have been twice at death's door; and the gin will not drive off that chill.—You will have *typhus fever*.

There comes my neighbour the bookbinder. His hand shakes as he raises his full glass. Ah, Shannon!—I dread to say it—but you will have the *palsy*.

The glasses are washed out, not cleansed, in the slop-tub under the bar-shelf. Now a fresh bevy comes up, cigar in hand. Gentlemen, what will you have? I choose to supply the answer for myself; thus: The baker there will have an *apoplexy* or a *sudden fall* in his shop. That tailor

in green glasses will have, or rather has already, a *consumption*. And I fear the three idlers in their train will have the next epidemic that shall sweep off our refuse drunkards.

But what will that man have who leans over the table, seeming to pore over the last "Herald"? He is scarcely resolved what he shall drink, or whether he shall drink at all. I understand the language of his motions; he is a renegade from the Temperance ranks. He has borrowed money this week. John, you will have *lodgings in a jail*.

Sorry indeed am I to see in this den Mr. Scantling, the cooper. Not to speak of himself, I have reason to believe that both his grown sons are beginning to drink. He looks about him suspiciously. Now he has plucked up courage. He takes whisky. You will have a pair of *drunken sons*.

That young fellow in the green frock coat and coloured neckcloth, is a musician, a man of reading, and the husband of a lovely English woman. He takes his glass with the air of a Greek drinking hemlock. You will have a *heart-broken wife*.

What! is that lad of fifteen going to the bar! He is: and he tosses off his Cognac with an air. You will have an *early death*.

The old man that totters out of the door has

doubtless come hither to drown his grief. His last son has died in prison, from the effects of a brawl in the theatre. The father has looked unutterable anguish every sober moment for two years. Wretched old man! You will have the *halter of a suicide*.

I must take the rest in mass, for it is Saturday night, and the throng increases. The bar-keeper has an assistant, in the person of a pale, sorrowful girl. Two voices now reiterate the challenge: *What will you have? What will you have?*

Misguided friends, I am greatly afraid you will all have a *death-bed without hope*.

My man has arrived. I must go; glad to escape to purer air: and still the parrot-note resounds in my ears, *What will you have?* You will have—to sum up all—you will have a *terrible judgment* and an *eternity of such retribution as befits your life*.

As I walked home across the common, I thought thus: “And what will he have, who, day after day, and month after month, and year after year, doles out the devil’s bounty to his recruits; and receives his sixpences, as it were, over the coffin of his victims? You, to say the least, hardened tempter, (if memory live hereafter) will have the recollection of your triumphs, and the vision of their eternal results.”

III.

THE MECHANIC'S REVERSE.

REVERSES of fortune befall all men, and a sudden one befell JOSEPH LEWIS. He had entered on a lucrative handicraft business with more capital than often comes to the hand of a cabinet-maker, such as he was; and, like a true-born American, who is never willing to let anybody get above him as long as he is able to rise, he shone out in a style of equipage, dress, and living, which was almost aristocratical. His chaise and horse, his marble mantel, his greyhound, his Joe Manton, his pointer, his dinner-service—all savoured of Bond street or St. Mark's place. Was he happy? He ought to have been so. A quiet, beautiful wife; a child such as Titania might have stolen; a full warehouse and a full pocket; are just the things to make a young man happy. So flushed was Joseph with success and hope, that he could not find vent for his exuberant satisfaction alone, or on cold water; he invited frequent groups to late dinners; he opened bottles

of Hock and Sauterne; he imported his own Parmesan.

I met Joseph in Broadway. He had come to town to make preparations for a ball. Was he happy? Ah! you must answer that yourself. He was abundantly *fine*—too fine for a gentleman; he was as smart as a barber on Sunday evening, or a wedding journeyman. His hat was a St. John; his mosaic pin was Baldwin's richest Tuscany; his whole manner was that of high fashion, save that it was all too full of a certain consciousness. And then he did *so* blush when a brother chip passed us; and his eye sparkled with the glimmer, not of serene joy, but of unaccustomed wine.

That day fortnight Joseph Lewis became insolvent. What a reverse! But stay—was he ruined? By no means. Let me bring forward another personage, thus far a mute in the scene. His wife threw her arms more passionately around his neck, on that evening, than ever before. Was Joseph now unhappy? His great house and useless stables were soon cleared. Finding himself a poor man, he began life at a new corner. *He* began, did I say?—No, *she* began; *Mary Lewis* began, not to assume the husband's place, but to fill her own. She sang a sweeter song after his frugal evening meal, than

had ever echoed over his sumptuous dinner from New York parasites, or stage-struck clerks. Is he unhappy? Let us see: he has neither carriage nor wines, but he has his hands full of work, and his two yellow-haired girls sit on his knee in the hour which he used to spend at the theatre. He has no cards; he gives no concerts; but he rests more sweetly at night; and he and Mary make good music on the guitar and flute, accompanying very passable voices. Last week I met him again. He was carrying home a picture which he had been framing. One blush—and then a hearty shake of my hand, and “O Charles! come and see us—we are rich enough to give you a good cup of tea—and my wife and children will be too much rejoiced to meet you.”

I went, and found him quiet, healthful, self-possessed, temperate, domestic; amidst a lovely home-circle; with music, books, a few philosophical instruments; living within his means: in a great reverse, but never so happy before.

The ancient philosophers spent a good part of their time in studying out rules by which men might sustain themselves under the changes of fortune. I have read many of these in my younger days. In none of them do I find any allusion to two things which I now regard as the

most indispensable in every such discussion: I mean domestic life and religion—the hearth and the altar. For when both sources of comfort are united in a gently pious wife, the working man who has this treasure, has that which in a reverse is more precious than rubies.

IV.

THE MECHANIC'S PLEASURES.—No. 2.

GEORGE BROWN is a shoemaker in this village. He grew up from a pale apprentice, into a still paler journeyman, with little prospect of long life. After being several times very low with coughs, he was supposed to have fallen into a consumption; and when I came to inquire into the case, I found that the physician had ordered him to seek a southern climate. It was not until the spring of 1835, when Brown returned from New Orleans, florid and robust, that I discovered what it was that had impaired his health. The fact was, he had become a great reader, and had most imprudently sat up a third part of his nights, studying such books as he could beg, borrow, or buy.

Those who have acquired no taste for learning will not believe me when I say, that there is scarcely a passion felt by man which is more powerful than the *thirst for knowledge*. It has slain its thousands; and it came near slaying George Brown. Why do I mention this? Cer-

tainly not to lead any promising apprentice into the like snare ; but simply to show that those mistake egregiously who think there is no pleasure in reading and study.

George Brown loved knowledge as much as ever, on his return from a residence of two years in the South ; but he had learned wisdom from experience. I have a little collection of good books, and by frequent lending, I had gained George's confidence. He let me into his plans. He now works with a thriving boot-maker, and is said to be one of his best hands ; and he is as different from his fellows in the shop, as young Ben Franklin was from his fellow printers. Wherein are they unlike ? Not in mere labour, for George's hammer, awl, and lapstone are plied as briskly as theirs ; the difference is all out of shop. While they are careering through the streets, arm in arm, puffing tobacco smoke, smiting the pavement with their cudgels ; or even worse, hanging about tavern doors, or playing at " all fours " with a greasy pack, or doing overwork in the nine-pin alley, George Brown is dividing his spare time between two things, *reading* and *recreation*.

In summer, he takes a good long walk, or he strays along the river bank, or he joins a party of quiet friends, until he feels the labour of the day to be half forgotten. Then, after a thorough cold

bath, which he learned in the South to be worth more than a whole medicine chest, he sits down to his books. True, he never gets more than an hour a day for reading, and often not ten minutes : but what of that ? “ Does not the jeweller,” says he, “ save the smallest filings of his gold ?” *Time is gold*. Every little helps. Constant dropping wears away rocks. Take care of the minutes ; the hours will take care of themselves. Never throw away an instant. These are maxims which he has laid up for life. And the young man who acts on these will never fail to be a scholar.

George Brown is as happy as the day is long. Being the best reader in the shop, he is, by common consent, permitted to read aloud from the newspaper and the Penny Magazine. The boys will laugh at him for a book-worm, and a parson, and so forth ; but George smiles knowingly, and says, “ Let them laugh that win !” While he labours with his hands, he is often turning over in his mind what he has read the night before. Some of his evenings are spent in taking lessons from an accomplished gentleman who instructs a class of young men ; and others in hearing philosophical lectures at a neighbouring Lyceum.

He has not a novel or a play-book on his shelves. These he calls the *champagne* of reading ; pleasant to take, but leaving you uneasy.

He is fond of history and travels : and books are now so cheap that he has more than fifty volumes. He showed me the Bible in several forms ; Josephus ; Tytler's History ; Plutarch's Lives ; Ramsey's United States ; Mackintosh's England ; Edwards's Lives of Self-Taught Men ; The Library of Entertaining Knowledge ; the Rambler ; the Spectator ; Milton, Thomson, Cowper, and Wordsworth ; and others of which I do not remember the titles.

Here is another of the mechanic's pleasures. And I am sure all who ever tried it, will agree that it is the best of the three. I hope, before long, to go into this subject more at large, in order to encourage the reader to enter a new field. It lies invitingly open to every young man who is willing to enjoy it. These fruits hang near the ground ; if the tree is hard to climb, it is only until you reach the first boughs. Young mechanics ! take a friend's advice, and TRY.

V.

THE MECHANIC'S SOCIAL PLEASURES.

WHEN any man's business grows so fast as to stand in the way of his being neighbourly, you may lay it down as a rule that it grows *too fast*. This is true of every sort of labour, whether of the mind or the body. We were not made to be unsocial, sullen, independent machines, but to love and help one another. "He that is a friend must *show* himself friendly;" and this is to be done by a pleasant and frequent intercourse with acquaintances and neighbours.

No wealth, nor power, nor selfish pleasure, can ever compensate for the absence of kindly intercourse. Working men may work so hard as to work out their best native propensities. In our haste to make money, let us look to it that we do not lose what no money can buy—true friendship.

The tendency to form friendly connexions and cultivate associations is so strong, that where it has not a good outlet, it will find a bad one. If a young man is not allowed to enjoy company at home, he will enjoy it at the tavern, or some

worse place. I find it in my heart to honour that principle of our nature which abhors a vacuum, and cries out that it is not good for man to be alone. The parent, the teacher, and the employer, in proportion as they seek the welfare of the youth under their care, will try to afford healthful exercise to the social principle.

Let me ask old housekeepers, whether amidst the great improvements of the times, there is not a change for the worse in our domestic and social intercourse. How did this matter stand some thirty years ago? Much as follows. John Den and Richard Fen, when they established themselves in this village, were both lately married, and had little families gathering like olive branches round their tables. They had worked in the same shop, and they remembered it. They had been apprentices *of the old stamp*, labouring a good seven years, and making six working days in every week. They knew one another thoroughly, and kept up a friendly communication. Scarcely a day passed in which John was not in Richard's shop, or Richard in John's: and Mrs. Den and Mrs. Fen ran across to one another often half a dozen times in a day. Their children grew up as friends, and once every week they made a joint concern, and took tea together. There was then but one grog house in the village, and neither

of these men was ever seen in it, except when Richard had occasion to go thither in his capacity of constable. It was a pleasant way of life. The little circle increased ; and other families quietly fell into the same arrangements ; so that, as I well remember, you could scarcely ever sit an hour of a summer's evening, in the house of any one of these mechanics, without witnessing the friendly entrance of a number of the neighbours. They did one another good, and their friendships, however humble, were comparatively pure.

But how does this matter stand now ? Much as follows. John Den and Richard Fen are dead and gone. In their place there are Dens and Fens, and husbands of Dens and Fens—enough to people a town in Illinois. Business is driven on in double quick time. George Washington Den has more journeymen this moment than his good father ever had in all his life. Napoleon Fen makes more money in one year than old Richard ever possessed. Meet these men where you will, and you will find them in a hurry. They are rushing forward, and can no more pause than can a railroad car. Their social intercourse is hasty, fitful, irregular, unsatisfactory, and feverish. Their earnings are spent at political meetings, at Trades' Unions, at entertainments, at taverns—in short, anywhere but *at home*.

Their sons and daughters are very fine, and gay, and to a certain degree polished; but they are growing up in total ignorance of that old-fashioned, wholesome, serene, and profitable intercourse, which gave to their parents an unwrinkled old age.

What is to be done? I think the remedy is obvious; but I fear most will resist it. *We must return to simplicity of manners.* We must cease to live so fast. We must take a little breath, and persuade ourselves that there are other and higher purposes to which hours may be devoted, than the earning of so many dollars and cents. It is poor economy of life to lay out all our time on mere gain, when by so doing we actually bid fair to make life not only shorter but less sweet.

Among the thousand evils of our unreformed taverns, it is not the least, that every one of them is the rival of some score of firesides. The real competition is between the bar-room and the sitting-room. License a new tavern, and you dig a sluice which draws off just so much from domestic comfort. Write it down—for it is true—whenever you see a young man standing much on tavern steps or porch, you see one who has little thrift, and who will die poor, even if he do not die drunk.

It is the great error of many parents to discourage evening visits between their own children and those of their neighbours. What is the consequence? The young men *will* and *must* have company. If they are frowned on at home, they will spend their evenings abroad. And as no youth can very freely visit young companions whom he is not allowed to entertain in return, the young men of these churlish families will be found at the bar-room. Here is a wide sluice prepared for intemperance and vice. Already, in some towns, *all the associations of working men are in the streets or in public places*. The evil cries aloud for speedy reformation. Who will set the example?

VI.

THE MECHANIC'S GARDEN.

IN the garden the mechanic finds a sort of relief from his toils of mind, which he can nowhere else find so cheaply. Let it not be thought strange that I speak of toils of *mind*. Every physician knows that it is the jaded soul, no less than the jaded body, which brings to his office the pale and tremulous working man. This may be seen in comparing different trades. The house carpenter, who works here and there, in every variety of situation, and most of all in the open air or the well-ventilated shed, shows a very different complexion from the tailor, the shoemaker, or the printer, who tasks himself from morning till night in the same spot. No man is called upon to spend all his hours at one sort of work. He who does so, works too much, and injures both mind and body. We all need elbow-room, resting-places, and breathing-spells, in every part of the journey of life.

It is often asked why we have so few good musicians among the mechanics of this country

One reason is, that they allow themselves so little time. From morning until night, it is hurry, hurry, hurry! Few men ever accomplished more than John Wesley, and his motto was, *Always in haste, but never in a hurry.* It is good to go out of doors sometimes, if it were only to cool down this American fever of the blood.

You are in too great a hurry to be rich, or you could take an hour before breakfast, and an hour after tea, for the purpose of healthful recreation; besides a good quiet hour in the middle of the day for absolute rest, including your principal meal.

“Ay, but I am already behindhand, and I must husband every moment to bring up arrears.”

Perhaps so: and this is only an evidence of bad management somewhere, in time past. Necessity has no law; but you ought to plan such a life as, by the blessing of Providence, may keep the wolf away from the door, and not leave you the prey of urgent necessity. You have already lost days by ill health; and this ill health was brought on by neglect of the laws of your animal economy; and one of these fundamental laws is, that a machine always running in gear, and never oiled or refitted, must go to pieces. Take your spade and hoe and rake, and come with me into the garden.

“I have no garden.”

No garden! why, what is that little enclosure which I see behind your house?

“O, it was once a garden—but—but—”

Yes, I see how it is; it was once a garden, but you have made it a rubbish-heap. See there, your cow is actually devouring a row of good spinach, this instant. Yes, yes—where your garden should be, you have a vile hog-stye; and there is your ley-tub dripping away in the prettiest corner of your court-yard.

“Why, to be sure, we have let matters go rather at sixes and sevens back here; my wood and coal are thrown over the fence, and we have chopped our fuel in the old garden path; but then nobody ever comes to see this part of the establishment.”

Surely, your wife and children see it; you see it yourself: I am afraid you would never wash your face if no one were to see you. This will never do. Take your spade and come out of this stupor.

“To tell you the truth, I have no spade!”

The more shame for you! Then throw off that apron, and go with me to the hardware shop, and I will pick you a good one, and we will get Barney to sharpen it, and go to work.

“I feel weary and dull—I have a headache

from leaning over my work so long ; I am not fit to dig."

Yes, you *are* dull enough ; and duller yet you will be, unless you amend your ways. Your skin is dry and sallow ; your eyes are heavy ; you are getting a sad stoop in your shoulders ; you are not the active, cheerful man you once were. In fact you are this moment ten years older than you have any right to be.

"I know it—I know it! My wife has said so every day for a twelvemonth. I know it—but what can I do? I have eaten half a hundred of bran bread ; I have taken three boxes of pills."

Miserable man ! I wonder you are not in your coffin ! Throw your bran bread and your pills into the swill pail.

"But, dear sir, what must I do?"

Do ! Take your spade, as I have been telling you. Here, I will show you how to begin. You have a very decent lot there ; only it has seven or eight boards off the fence.

"Yes, they have been coming off all winter."

Surprising ! and you have slept over it all this time ! Here, John ! Jacob ! Call out your apprentices for five minutes. Let me take the command.—Bill can stay and have an eye to customers. John, run to Mr. Deal's for his saw. Jacob, pull out that pile of old boards from under

the wheelbarrow. I'll take my coat off, and if your strength allows, perhaps you had better take yours off too. We shall have this breach stopped in ten minutes, if you can produce a handful of nails.

“Well, Mr. Quill, I really never thought of this way before!”

I should like to know what other way there is! “Off coat, and at it,” is the only way I am acquainted with.

“Now you have the fence up, what next?”

Clear off this rubbish. Rake together these stalks of last year's weeds, and burn them. Gather out the thousand and one sticks, and stones, and old shoes. Get a bit of old cord and mark out some walks. Furnish yourself with tools, and begin to-morrow morning by sunrise to dig up the ground. I will be ready to give you seeds and plants; and by this day week, my word for it, you will show some circulation in your wan cheeks, and not look so black under the eyes. The only pity is, that you should not have had your peas and beans in ten days ago: but better late than never.

When God made man, he placed in his hand the spade and pruning-hook. When God restored man to the beautiful earth, after the flood, he promised not to curse the ground any more,

and to give seed-time and harvest as duly as day and night. When God spake to man, he condescended to use the language of the gardener; for the gentlest invitations and incitements of Holy Writ come to us breathing the odours of the "rose of Sharon," the "fig-tree and the vine," and the "lily of the valleys." And I am fain to believe that in the cool morning hour, when, with devout thankfulness, the father of an humble family, with his little ones about him, gently tills his plot of ground, training his vines, and watering his tender herbs, God often condescends in the secrecy of a heart brought into harmony with nature, to whisper words of awful grace.

I entreat my friends of the labouring classes to cultivate the earth. I entreat them to take advantage of every little nook of ground about their dwellings. Flowers are the gems of the soil; we ought to nurture, to gather, and to enjoy them. I shrink from the denaturalized creature who has outlived his childish love of flowers. Better have a gay garden than a gay parlour; better keep a bed of tulips than a horse and chaise. "When ages grow to civility and elegance, men come to build stately sooner than to garden finely; as if gardening were the greater perfection." So saith my Lord Bacon.

VII.

THE MECHANIC'S FASHIONS.

EVERY one is ready enough to cry out against the tyranny of fashion, yet almost every one meekly submits. Here and there, in my daily walks, I fall in with a few elderly men, fellows of the old school, who prefer comfort to appearances. You may know them a hundred yards off, by the easy, contented, independent carriage of their bodies, and the fulness and simplicity of their garb. The cut of their coats is not very unlike that of the year eighteen hundred, and their red cheeks would dissolve in a healthy smile if you should speak to them of the reigning mode.

I am no friend to mere fashion as a directress of life; she is a capricious sultana who mocks us into disguises, and then punishes us for compliance. Who can tell the money out of which she has cheated the mechanics of America!

If we were systematically inclined, we might draw up a brief, as thus: I. Fashion in general. II. Fashion in particulars. 1. In dress. 2. In equipage. 3. In furniture. 4. In living. 5. In

manners. 6. In opinions. 7. In religion. But before I could reach the remaining specifications I might possibly wax wearisome. Let us forbear undue method.

FREDERICK FITZ-FRANCIS, in despite of his name, is a haberdasher; so he used to be called in Cheapside, but in America, where rivers, cata-racts, and names, are bigger than in the old world, he is a dry goods merchant. He is a proper man, and the very mirror of gentility, giving the ray after its third or fourth reflection; his neck-cloth is immaculate; his collar pokes beyond his black whiskers, in the precise acute angle which is just the thing. Not long since he chose to call on his neighbour and former friend, THOMAS CHUBB, the carriage-maker, who had recently established himself in a new house.

“Well, Chubb,” said Mr. Fitz-Francis, “I thought I would look in upon ye.”

“I am sure you are welcome, Frederick, and I shall be pleased to show you over my new house.”

“Just what I came for; but look ye, Chubb, I don’t like this arrangement of your court-yard. Nobody in town has such a space laid out in flowers.”

Here Chubb smiled.

“Let us go in. How is this! Upon my word you can’t be furnished yet, in this parlor.”

“Yes, I am ; what's the matter ?”

“Matter ! Why I don't know, but things have a very odd, unfashionable look.”

“Perhaps so, Frederick ; I am not a man of fashion, though I sometimes turn out a fashionable carriage. But what is wrong ?”

“Why, your chairs are very droll.”

“Are they ? Just sit in one of them, and tell me whether you find them easy.”

“Pshaw ! that is not the thing. Hem—ah—on my word, they *are* uncommonly easy, but out of date—nobody has the like.”

“Very likely ; they were made in my own shop, and after my own plan, and they are wider, lower, and softer than any chairs in town.”

“Dear me, Mr. Chubb ! have you not a pier-glass ?”

“None, I assure you. If you wish to dress, or look at your whiskers, I have an old mirror in the other room.”

“Come, come, no drollery : but surely you mean to introduce a centre-table.”

“Not I,” said Chubb ; “I find it irksome to look at a toy-table, with playthings, albums, and little smelling-bottles, standing forever in the way.” And he smiled to think that even Mr. Fitz was here behind the fashion.

“Well, Mr. Chubb, if you are bent upon

saving and living without expense, pray be consistent, and carry matters out.—Why have you these oil paintings on your walls? They must have cost you more than a pier-glass or a claw-foot table.”

“They did; and I am *not* bent on saving. The pictures gratify my taste; the gimeracks would have been only a tax paid to that of other people. Where money gives me or my friends real comfort, or innocent pleasure, or solid profit, I grudge it not; but not a cent in mere aping of others. I wear a high-priced boot, but I take care that it shall not pinch my toes into corns. That sofa, on the other hand, cost me but fifteen dollars, but it is as comfortable as a bed. And that homely piece of furniture which you are eyeing with so much contempt, is an old organ which my wife’s father once played on, and which my daughter is beginning to touch quite pleasantly. You perceive I am what the world considers an odd fellow; but I find independent satisfaction in abstaining from a chase after ever-varying modes. Even *you*, allow me to hint, are only half-way in the race, and are as ridiculous in the eyes of the grandees you imitate, as I am in yours. Come in this evening, and we will show you our fashions in food.”

VIII.

THE MECHANIC IN STRAITS.

HISTORIANS have been busy for several thousands of years, but they have not described any one class of men which is exempt from trouble. The most sturdy beggars, in the greatest paradise of mendicity, are sometimes brought to a non-plus. Belisarius, the champion of the wealthiest empire yet recorded, was reduced to beg his farthing. And a European king, in the last century, died penniless in England.

After this becoming preface, we may go fairly to work on our subject. I heartily sympathize with the man who is reduced to want, without his own fault; especially if he is a man who earns his bread with the sweat of his brow; and, most of all, if he has to share his sorrow and loss with a confiding wife and helpless children. There are many such, for we meet them in almost every walk, downcast and unemployed; there are more than we at first suppose, for the greatest sufferers shun the glare of observation.

American mechanics are said to love money,

and Mrs. Trollope writes, that one cannot hear two Americans talking together for five minutes, without the repetition of the word *dollar*. Jeremy Bentham makes the same remark of the lower English, except that for *dollar* he reads *beer*. Europeans seem resolved to fix on us the charge of loving gold. If this be true in any discreditable sense, it is so in a sense different from that of the olden time. The money-lover of our day is bad enough, but he is not the *miser* of old stories. He grasps, but does not hoard. The excitement which drives him on to rapid gains is only one branch of a wider excitement having many branches, characteristic of our time and country, and susceptible of a direction to good as well as evil. The old-time money-maker was a tortoise, and when a storm came he closed his shell. The modern money-maker is a bird of the air; the tempest drenches, and peradventure stuns him, but at the first laughing sunshine he is again on the wing. Let the mechanic in straits hope strongly for deliverance. Many are now reduced to great difficulties by changes in the commercial world, which they had no hand in producing. In such circumstances, when the father of a family sees the dearest object of his affections brought into want and distress, there is a great temptation to discontent and repining.

This tendency must be resisted ; it never did any good, and it never can. No man ever gained by grumbling. Complaint, recriminations, and even curses, serve neither to make the hunger smaller nor the loaf larger. Stick a pin there, and consider. Here is a starting point.

Not many hours ago I heard *Uncle Benjamin* discoursing this matter to his son, who was complaining of the pressure. "Rely upon it, Sammy," said the old man, as he leaned on his staff, with his gray locks flowing in the breeze of a May morning, "murmuring pays no bills. I have been an observer any time these fifty years, and I never saw a man helped out of a hole by cursing his horses. Be as quiet as you can, for nothing will grow under a moving harrow, and discontent harrows the mind. Matters are bad, I acknowledge, but no ulcer is any the better for fingering. The more you groan the poorer you grow.

"Repining at losses is only putting pepper into a sore eye. Crops will fail in all soils, and we may be thankful that we have not a famine. Besides, I always took notice that whenever I felt the rod pretty smartly, it was as much as to say, 'Here is something which you have got to learn.' Sammy, don't forget that your schooling is not over yet, though you have a wife and two children."

“Ay,” cried Sammy, “you may say that, and a mother-in-law and two apprentices into the bargain. And I should like to know what a poor man can learn here, when the greatest scholars and lawyers are at loggerheads, and can’t for their lives tell what has become of the hard money.”

“Softly, Sammy! I am older than you. I have not got these gray hairs and this crooked back without some burdens. I could tell you stories of the days of continental money, when my grandfather used to stuff a sulky-box with bills in order to pay for a yearling or a wheat-fan; and when Jersey-women used thorns for pins, and laid their teapots away in the garret. You wish to know what you may learn? You may learn these seven things:

“First, *That you have saved too little and spent too much.* I never taught you to be a miser, but I have seen you giving your dollar for a ‘notion,’ when you might have laid one half aside for charity, and another half for a rainy day.

“Secondly, *That you have gone too much upon credit.* I always told you that credit was a shadow; it shows that there is a substance behind, which casts the shadow; but a small body may cast a great shadow; and no wise man will follow the shadow any further than he can see

substance. You may now learn that you have followed the opinion and fashion of others till you have been deooyed into a bog.

“Thirdly, *That you have been in too much haste to become rich.* Slow and easy wins the race.

“Fourthly, *That no course of life can be depended on as always prosperous.* I am afraid the younger race of working men in America have had a notion that nobody could go to ruin on this side of the water. Providence has greatly blessed us, but we have become presumptuous.

“Fifthly, *That you have not been thankful enough to God for his benefits in time past.*

“Sixthly, *That you may be thankful that our lot is no worse;* we might have famine, or pestilence, or war, or tyranny, or all together.

“And lastly, to end my sermon, you may learn to offer with more understanding the prayer of your infancy, ‘*Give us this day our daily bread.*’”

The old man ceased, and Sammy put on his apron, and told Dick to blow away at the forge-bellows.

IX.

THE MECHANIC'S WIFE.

IN America, every mechanic is supposed to have, or to be about to have, a wife. The many thousands of these spouses are divided into sorts. Thus we have good and bad; very good and very bad; unspeakably good and insufferably bad; and—as a sort of *par* expression—*tolerable*. It is not every good woman who is a good wife; nor is it every good wife who is a good wife for the mechanic. A working man needs a working wife; but as to qualities of mind, manners, and morals, she cannot run too high in the scale. There is an error prevalent concerning this.

GILES says, "I do not want a wife with too much sense." Why not? Perhaps Giles will not answer; but the shrug of his shoulders answers, "Because I am afraid she will be an overmatch for me." Giles talks like a simpleton. The unfortunate men who have their tyrants at home are never married to women of sense. Genuine elevation of mind cannot prompt

any one, male or female, to go out of his or her proper sphere. No man ever suffered from an overplus of intelligence, whether in his own head or his wife's.

HODGE says, "I will not marry a girl who has too much manners." Very well, Hodge: you are right; *too much* of any thing is bad. But consider what you say. Perhaps you mean that a fine lady would not suit you. Very true; I should not desire to see you joined for life to what is called a "fine lady," to wit, to a woman who treats you as beneath her level, sneers at your friends, and is above her business. But this is not good manners. Real good manners and true politeness are equally at home in courts and farm houses. This quality springs from nature, and is the expression of unaffected good will. Even in high life, the higher you go the simpler do manners become. Parade and "fuss" of manners are the marks of half-bred people. True simplicity and native good will, and kind regard for the convenience and feelings of others, will ensure good manners, even in a kitchen: and I have seen many a vulgar dame in an assembly, and many a gentlewoman in an humble shed. Nay, your wife *must* have good manners.

RALPH declares, "I hope I may never have a wife who is too strict and moral." Now, my

good Ralph, you talk nonsense. Who taught you that cant? I perceive you do not know what you mean. Are you afraid your wife will be too virtuous?

“Bless me! no.”

Then you rather prefer a moral wife to an immoral one?

“Surely.”

Are you afraid, then, of a religious wife?

“Why something like that *was* in my head; for there is neighbour Smith’s wife, who gives him no peace of his life, she is so religious.”

Let me hear how she behaves herself.

“Why, she is forever teaching the children out of the Bible.”

Indeed! And you, Ralph, are an enemy of the Bible?

“O, no! But then—ahem—there is reason in all things.”

Yes, and the reason you have just given is that of a child, and, like the child’s *because*, is made to do hard service. But let me understand you. Does Mrs. Smith teach the children any thing wrong?

“O, no! But plague it all! if one of them hears Smith let fly an oath, it begins to preach at him.”

Then you wish, when you have children, to

have liberty to teach them all the usual oaths and curses, and obscene jokes that are common.

“Dear me, Mr. Quill, you won't understand me.”

Yes, I understand you fully : it is you, Ralph, who do not understand yourself. Look here. Mrs. Smith is so religious that if she proceeds as she has begun, her children will break their father of his low blasphemies. I hope you may get just such a wife.

“But then, Smith can't spend a couple of hours at the tavern for fear of his wife !”

Ah ! what does he go to the tavern for ?

“Just to sit and chat, and drink a little.”

And how does his wife interfere ? Does she fetch him home ?

“No.”

Does she chastise him on his return ?

“O, no !”

Does she scold him then ?

“No.”

What is it then that disturbs him ?

“Why, she looks so solemn and mournful, and shuts herself up so and cries, whenever he is a little disguised, that the man has no satisfaction.”

Good ! And I pray he may have none until he alters his course of life.

A proper self-respect would teach every noble-hearted American, of whatever class, that he cannot set too high a value on the conjugal relation. We may judge of the welfare and honour of a community by its wives and mothers. Opportunities for acquiring knowledge, and even accomplishments, are happily open to every class above the very lowest; and the wise mechanic will not fail to choose such a companion as may not shame his sons and daughters in that coming age, when an ignorant American shall be as obsolete as a fossil fish.

Away with flaunting, giggling, dancing, squandering, peevish, fashion-hunting wives! The woman of this stamp is a poor comforter when the poor husband is sick or bankrupt. Give me the *house-wife*, who can be a "help-meet" to her Adam :

———"For nothing lovelier can be found
In woman, than to study household good,
And good works in her husband to promote."

I have such a mechanic's wife in my mind's eye: gentle as the antelope, untiring as the bee, joyous as the linnet; neat, punctual, modest, confiding. She is patient, but resolute; aiding in counsel, reviving in troubles, ever pointing out the brightest side, and concealing nothing but her

own sorrows. She loves her home, believing with Milton, that

“The wife, where danger and dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or *with her the worst endures.*”

The place of woman is eminently at the fire-side. It is at home that you must see her, to know who she is. It is less material what she is abroad; but what she is in the family circle is all-important. It is bad merchandise, in any department of trade, to pay a premium for other men's opinions. In matrimony, he who selects a wife for the applause or wonder of his neighbours, is in a fair way towards domestic bankruptcy. Having got a wife, there is but one rule—*honour and love her*. Seek to improve her understanding and her heart. Strive to make her more and more such an one as you can cordially respect. Shame on the brute in man's shape, who can affront or vex, not to say neglect, the woman who has embarked with him for life, “for better, for worse,” and whose happiness, if severed from his smiles, must be unnatural and monstrous. In fine, I am proud of nothing in America so much as of our American wives.

X.

THE MECHANIC DOING GOOD.

THE duties of life are not all of the great and exciting sort. There are many duties in every day; but there are few days in which one is called to mighty efforts or heroic sacrifices. I am persuaded that most of us are better prepared for great emergencies, than for the exigencies of the passing hour. Paradox as this is, it is tenable, and may be illustrated by palpable instances. There are many men who would, without the hesitation of an instant, plunge into the sea to rescue a drowning child, but who, the very next hour, would break an engagement, or sneer at an awkward servant, or frown unjustly on an amiable wife.

Life is made up of these little things. According to the character of household words, looks, and trivial actions, is the true temper of our virtue. Hence there are many men reputed good, and, as the world goes, really so, who belie in domestic life the promise of their holiday and Sunday demeanour. Great in the large assembly,

they are little at the fireside. Leaders, perhaps, of public benevolence, they plead for universal love, as the saving principle of the social compact; yet, when among their dependents, they are peevish, morose, severe, or in some other way constantly sinning against the law of kindness.

Why do you begin to do good *so far off*? This is a reigning error. Begin at the centre and work outwards. If you do not love your wife, do not pretend to such love for the people of the antipodes. If you let some family grudge, some peccadillo, some undesirable gesture, sour your visage towards a sister or a daughter, pray cease to preach beneficence on the large scale.

What do you mean by "doing good"? Is it not increasing human happiness? Very well! But *whose* happiness? Not the happiness of A, B, or C, in the planet Saturn, but that of fellow-terrestrials; not of the millions you never see, so much as that of the hundreds or scores whom you see every day. Begin to make people happy. It is a good work—it is the best work. Begin, not next door, but within your own door; with your next neighbour—whether relative, servant, or superior. Account the man you meet the man you are to bless. Give him such things as you have. "How can I make him or her happier?" This is the question. If a dollar will do it, give

the dollar. If advice will do it, give advice. If chastisement will do it, give chastisement. If a look, a smile, or warm pressure of the hand, or a tear will do it, give the look, smile, hand, or tear. But never forget that the happiness of our world is a mountain of golden sands, and that it is your part to cast some contributory atom almost every moment.

I would hope that such suggestions, however hackneyed, will not be without their influence

“ On that best portion of a good man’s life,
His *little, nameless, unremembered acts*
Of kindness and of love.”*

In a season of great reverses and real suffering in the mercantile and manufacturing world, there is occasion for the luxury of doing good. The happiest mechanic I ever knew was a hatter, who had grown rich, and who felt himself thereby exalted only in this sense, that his responsibility as a steward was increased. It was sacred wealth,

“ For God, who gave the riches, gave the heart
To sanctify the whole, by giving part.”†

The poorest man may lessen his neighbour’s load. He who has no gold may give what gold cannot purchase. If religion does not make men

* Wordsworth’s Tintern Abbey.

† Dryden.

who profess it more ready to render others happy, it is a pretence. We are to be judged at the last by this rule. The inquiry is to be especially concerning our conduct towards the sick, the prisoner, the pauper, and the foreigner. The neighbour whom we are to love is our *next door* neighbour; that is, the man who falls in our way. The Samaritan knew this. It was but a small pittance he gave: the poorest among us may go and do likewise. Do not allow a townsman, or a stranger, or even an emigrant, to suffer for lack of your endeavours. It will cost you little, but it will be much to him.

“’Tis a little thing
 To give a cup of water; yet its draught
 Of cool refreshment, drained by fevered lips,
 May give a shock of pleasure to the frame
 More exquisite than when nectarean juice
 Renews the life of joy in happiest hours.
*It is a little thing to speak a phrase
 Of common comfort which by daily use
 Has almost lost its sense; yet on the ear
 Of him who thought to die unmourned ’twill fall
 Like choicest music.”**

Let no one be surprised at my quoting choice poetry to mechanics. Servile boors may stare in amaze; but the *American* mechanic is no boor.

* Mr. Sergeant Talfourd.

Who shall dare to say that the poorest journeyman may not reach forth his hand in the garden of the muses? And who shall deny to the honest labourer the solace of doing good? It is the best work, in the worst times. Help others and you relieve yourself. Go out, and drive away the cloud from that distressed friend's brow, and you will return with a lighter heart. Take heed to the *little things*—the trifling, unobserved language or action—passing in a moment. A syllable may stab a blessed hope: a syllable may revive the dying. A frown may crush a gentle heart; the smile of forgiveness may relieve from torture. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

XI.

THE MECHANIC'S FOUR TEMPTATIONS IN
HARD TIMES.

OF the city of Trenton there was a plumber, of quiet life and good habits, and his name was SIMON STARK. We met in the market on a fine morning, and talked over the distresses of the times; for I sometimes go to the seats of justice and legislation, and always take pains to survey the public gatherings. I perceived that Simon was in trouble. He was out of employment, out of money, and out of heart. So sad was his visage, that I thought of him all day, and then dreamed of him at night; and my dream was this.

I saw Simon sitting under the light of the new moon, at his back door, which looks into a small garden. The scent of roses and Bermuda grape vines filled the air. He clasped his hands and looked upward. Occasionally, the voice of his wife, hushing to sleep a half-famished child, caused him to groan. Simon was pondering on

the probable sale of his little place, and the beggary of his family.

A heavy cloud passed over. A thin silvery haze veiled the surrounding shrubbery. An unaccustomed whispering sound was heard, and Simon rubbed his eyes and looked up wistfully.

From amidst the vapour, a figure dimly seen emerged into the space before the porch, as if about to speak. It resembled a haggard old man. He seated himself near Simon, who shuddered a little, for the visiter was lank and wretched in appearance, and his hollow eye shot out the glare of a viper. Hatred and anguish were blended into one penetrating expression. He trembled as he spoke, and I could now and then catch a word, which seemed to be injurious to the character of various persons. Simon was much moved, and ever and anon clenched his fist, smote his thigh, and muttered, "True, true! all men are liars—all men are oppressors—all men are my enemies!"

The old man drew nearer, and spoke more audibly: "Simon, you are a discerning person. You have been wronged. The habits of society are tyrannical. The rich grind you to the dust. The poor cheat you and rejoice in your woes. Learn wisdom; forget your idle forbearance;

cease from womanish love to the race. 'They are all alike.'

Then there was a pause; the old man moved slowly away, and Simon gazed on vacancy, as he pronounced several times the syllable, *hate! hate! hate!*

How long the reverie would have lasted I know not, but a sweet, fair, cherub-like child, thrust its curled head out of the adjoining window and said, "Father, I have got another verse, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.'"

Simon arose, shook his limbs, and said, "Now I know the tempter! It is the demon MISANTHROPY. Begone!"

Again I looked, and Simon had aroused himself, and was looking towards the garden walk, where a tall female form in mourning weeds was approaching with grave and languid pace. She stood over the poor plumber, who shrank from her fascination, for there was an unearthly influence issuing from her leaden countenance, and he seemed benumbed by an indescribable nightmare. She drew from under the folds of her mantle a phial of some black mixture, which she held to his nostrils. His face immediately assumed a hue like her own: it was the visage of

hopeless grief. She said in his ear with a sepulchral tone: "All is lost! all is lost! Think of your wife in a poor-house—your dear babes in beggary—yourself in a prison.—All is lost!"

Then there was a pause, during which Simon seemed bowing towards the earth, his face buried in his hands. The phantom's eye lightened with a flash of diabolical joy, as she slipped into his hands a glittering dagger.

At this instant the window opened, and the same lovely child, with infantile joy, cried out, "Father, listen to another pretty verse: 'Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.'"

Simon wiped the cold moisture from his brow, and feebly smiled; the phantom vanished, and he waved his hand, saying, "Begone, DESPAIR!"

I then saw in my dream that the clouds cleared away, and the moon shone pleasantly over all the neighbouring gardens. Simon arose, saying, as he took a turn in the little green alley, "Surely I must have been asleep—I will walk in among the flowers, and then I shall not be haunted by these doleful thoughts. He soon found every thing take a more cheerful hue; and just as he

began to recover from his gloom, he thought he heard the footsteps of some one entering the back-gate of the garden. He moved in that direction, and met a gentleman in black, with a gold-headed cane, gold spectacles, and gold chain—a fair-spoken, bright-eyed man, whom he thought he had seen at one of the banks. Simon was in error, for he had never seen him before.

“Mr. Stark?” said the stranger.

“That is my name.”

“I was passing, and was pleased with the smell of your stock-gilley flowers—thought I would look in.”

“You are welcome, sir,” said Simon, a little surprised.

“And since I am here,” said the gentleman, “I should like to hear a word or two about the state of money-matters, as I am rather a stranger in your place.”

Simon gave him the information sought, involuntarily mingling some accounts of his own trouble. The stranger listened eagerly; his eye gleaming with benevolent interest, while he jingled eagles and dollars in his pockets. Then wiping his glasses with a white handkerchief, and settling his stock, he smiled knowingly, and said:

“Stark, I am glad I came in. I am some years your elder—have been abroad—know the world—long in the East India service—three years cashier of a bank—some acquaintance with finance. Stark, you are a happy man. ’Tis an ill wind that blows nobody good. Let us go into your house, while I untie these papers, and I’ll put you in the way of making your fortune in two weeks. I know your look—you are too keen a one to fail of being a rich man, for the sake of any old primer proverbs. Live and let live; that’s my motto.”

They went in.—He opened piles of papers, some of which resembled uncut sheets of bank notes. I could not hear the particulars, but Simon’s face glowed at beholding a purse of gold which was thrown carelessly on the table. But while the gentleman was mending a pen for Simon to write something, a door opened—the dear little girl entered with an open book, and asked her father to hear her read the following passage, viz: Proverbs, chapter first, verses 10—19. Upon which the strange gentleman looked for his hat, and vainly tried to pick up the card, on which he had given his address; he departed with a sulphurous smell, and Simon read on the card the name of Mr. FRAUD.

Simon looked as if he rejoiced at a great escape, while at the same time he was alarmed at being surrounded by such bad company. He therefore opened his closet, and took a draught of ale, and then went to the door to see who had knocked. It was a beautiful woman, and Simon was about to call his wife, but the visiter said, with a voluptuous smile,

“No, do not call her; my visit is to you. Several of your friends have heard of your straits, and have discovered what it is that you want. Could you relieve me from this faintness which has come over me by a glass of wine?”

Simon of course took a glass himself. The lady looked lovelier than ever—her cheeks were roses; her hand was velvet; her breath was the perfume of the vine. She enchanted poor Simon with a voice of music, and over another glass of wine, into which she sprinkled certain atoms, he began to feel as rich as Astor, as happy as a child.

“Why, O why,” said she, “have you allowed yourself to sink in despondency. Live while you live! A short life and a merry one!”

And Simon, with a cracked voice, began to carol, *Begone, dull care*: when a little sweet voice cried through the key-hole, “*Wine is a*

mockers." The lady departed, and Simon dashed the decanter to the floor, exclaiming, *Begone, INTEMPERANCE!*

And I awoke from my dream.

XII.

THE MECHANIC'S VACATION.

It is supposed that American mechanics work more days in the week than any free men on earth, as it is certain that they effect more in a given time than any slaves. For even where there is no Sunday, working men have many festivals, holidays, and fasts, which give the pretext for relaxation. In great manufacturing establishments these habits of persevering labour are sometimes impaired by the practice of assigning weekly tasks to the younger workmen; but in rural districts the cheerful hum of honest toil is heard from Monday morning until Saturday night. We are a busy people, and must ever be so, while high prizes are held out to all alike, and while no caste excludes the labourer from attaining respectability as well as affluence. Whether this persistency in hard work has a good moral tendency, is a grave inquiry which I shall leave to more profound heads. As matters stand, the generality of the productive classes have no voluntary vacations. The lawyer relaxes between his

terms; the doctor between his cases, and in healthy seasons. The sallow nervous clergyman flies to Saratoga or Rockaway; the merchant leaves town for the dog-days; but my neighbour the saddler seems to me to have been at his brisk employment late and early these ten years. Thus it is with multitudes of our mechanics.

These are thoughts which have often occurred to me when passing through the towns and villages of Pennsylvania and New Jersey; and I have mused and calculated how much money these busy bees must have laid up against the season of ice and tempest. Yet I am not sure that I should have alighted on so happy a title as that which graces this paper, if it had not been for the following incident. On a prime day of this leafy month of June, I was passing along that beautiful road which leads up the right bank of the winding Raritan, in a northwesterly direction from New Brunswick. There are few more desirable drives in Jersey. The hills, divested of forest, but clad in herbage, stand high enough to invite the free access of every breeze; in this resembling the downs of England. It is what Old Burton would call "a cotswold country, as being most commodious for hawking, hunting, wood, water, and all manner of pleasures:" and the gentle river sleeps along under the green bank with a quietude which

the early Dutch settlers of Somerset must have regarded as paradisiacal. It was the season of clover, and to say that, is to say enough to any man who lacks not the two great senses for vegetable enjoyment. In the corner of a rank field, besprinkled with a million of fragrant flowering heads, and under the shade of a cherry tree, on which the earliest blush of the fruit was visible among the dark green, there sat, or rather reclined, two travellers. Their light packs lay by their side, and their hats were flung over upon the greensward. One was a man about sixty, the other a mere youth. It does me good, now and then, amidst our business stiffness, to snatch a scene like this, which half realizes some of the pastoral pictures of my boyish reading. There they lay, as careless as though Adam had never done a day's work, as unaffectedly rural as any vagabond in Gil Blas, or any shepherd in a landscape of Poussin or Claude.

I mean no disparagement to a respectable and indispensable craft, (and ancient withal, for I have before me good authority for declaring that the "merchant tailors were completely incorporated in the year 1501, by Henry VII., their arms being argent a tent, three robes gules, on a chief azure, a lion passant regardant, or with this motto, *concordia parvæ res crescunt*,") but I at once per-

ceived them to be tailors; by what free masonry I shall not define. I made free to tie my horse and join company, and before ten minutes had elapsed, I had become well acquainted with their views of that commercial pressure, of which no two men have precisely the same understanding. After having fully learned how well they had thriven, how many dollars they had earned each week, how handsomely they had lived, and how all their hopes had been dashed by the loss of employment, I adjusted my hat, wiped my spectacles, and after a few grimaces, such as all lecturers deem suitable to an exordium, I proceeded to administer a little admonition.

I perceive, my good friends, said I, that times have begun to pinch you.

“Not at all,” interrupted the elder, “we are only enjoying the *Tailor’s Vacation*.”

Bravo! cried I, forgetting in an instant my previous train of condolence, there is a new idea, which is always worth a day’s work to any man.

“Not so new, either, with Roger,” said the youth, “for he has said the same thing at every green resting-place since we left Somerville.”

“But good,” replied Roger, “whether new or old. I am no Ben Franklin, and never expect to invent any thing to catch lightning, or to be in Congress; but, for all that, I do sometimes moral-

ize a bit, and I see that every thing goes down better with us under a good name. *Pressure* is well enough, to be sure, as I can testify when the last dollar is about to be pressed out of me ; but *Vacation* is capital. It tickles one's fancy with the notion of choice. 'Nothing on compulsion' is my motto. I have often thought that if I were a slave, I should put a good face on it, and strut among my tobacco-hills with a show of goodwill."

So you keep up your cheer, said I, even in the worst weather ?

"Why not? I am learning a good lesson. Fifteen years have I worked without losing a month by sickness, or a day by dissipation. I have seen others resting, but I have scarcely ever rested. The repose which they got by driblets I am getting by wholesale. I am learning that I have worked too much, saved too little, and made no provision for winter days. It would be a bad state of things in which men could feel sure of being above reverses. The pressure impresses me with a sense of the instability of things. Then it tries my resolution. He who wants content can't find an easy chair. 'Better days will come,' as my good old mother in the old-country used to say ; I have had sunshine, and perhaps I need the shade. There is a saying of somebody, 'I

myself had been happy, if I had been unfortunate in time.' It is time enough for Frank here, but he grumbles more than I do; let him lay up wisdom for the next storm."

Sir, said I, it was my purpose to advise you, but I had rather listen.

Roger blushed and smiled.

"It is a way I have got," said he, "by talking among my juniors. Being a bachelor, I live among boys, and perhaps I discourse too much; but I am resolved to turn the best side of my coat outside. And if I live through this pinch, rely upon it I will be more wary. True, it is becoming a bad business, and before two days more I shall be like the tailors of Twickenham, who worked for nothing and found thread. But I am learning. Experience keeps a dear school, but fools will learn in no other. I can dig or plough; nothing is plentier than land, and my weak chest needs the balm of the country. It is worth something to lie among this clover; and when I marry I shall have more adventures to tell than if I had grown double over the press-board."

After further discourse, I left the cheerful tailor enjoying his vacation.

XIII.

THE MECHANIC'S CHILDREN.

LET a group of children be gathered at a school or play-ground, and whether they be rich or poor, gentle or simple, they will coalesce so as to realize the most complete levelling theory. If this is true of the very poor, how much more apparent is it, when the comparison takes in the offspring of the well-doing mechanic. Children, take them one with another, are beautiful creatures—at least in America,—nay all the world over. Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed that children, until mistaught, always throw their limbs into graceful attitudes. I trouble myself very little, when I meet a rosy, ingenuous, clean, and happy child, with the inquiry, whether it be aristocratic or plebeian in its origin. John Randolph, of Roanoke, was often in the habit of alluding to certain families, as having no ancestral portraits. Now I question whether the great orator would not have given Bushy Forest, or even Roanoke, for a pair of boys. It is better to have fruit on the limbs, than ever so many dead roots under

ground. A cluster of merry, healthy boys and girls, is better than a family crest, or old plate, or faded pictures, or a genealogical tree, or the pitiful pride of penniless grandeur. 'These olive branches around one's table afford good presumption of a certain degree of health and virtue ; and are just what the effete patricians of lordly Britain often sigh for in vain. Every now and then some great family goes out, like a dying lamp, with an impotent conclusion. Blessed are those poor men who are rich in children such as I mean !

I plead guilty to the charge of living at the corner of a very narrow alley with a somewhat ignoble name. My window looks upon this humble avenue, which is properly a *cul-de-sac*. At a certain hour of every day it is filled with boys and girls ; for at the further end of it there is a "madam's school." My writing is ever and anon interrupted by the joyous laugh or the scream of ecstasy from these romping creatures : I seldom fail to look out, and am generally as long nibbing my pen at the window, as they are in making their irregular procession through the lane. True, they have pulled a board off my garden fence, and foraged most naughtily among my gooseberries ; but what of that ? I have many a time paid a heavier tax for a less pretty sight.

They are happy : and so am I, while I look at them.

Surely nothing can be more graceful or attractive than the fawn-like girl, not yet in her teens, not yet practising any factitious steps, and not yet seduced into the bold coquetry and flirting display of the "young miss." Whose children are these? The children of mechanics; almost without exception. Call it not pride in the anxious mother, that she decks these little ones in the cleanliest, fairest product of her needle, and shows off with innocent complacency the chubby face or the slender ankle; call it not *pride*, but *love*. The mechanic's wife has a heart; and over the cradle, which she keeps in motion while she plies her task, she sometimes wanders in musing which needs the aid of poesy to represent it. She feels that she is an *American* mother; she knows her boy not only *may* but *must* have opportunities of advancement far superior to those of his parents. She blushes in forethought to imagine him illiterate and unpolished when he shall have come to wealth: and therefore she denies herself that she may send him to school.

What a security Providence has given us for the next race of men, in the gushing fulness of that perpetual spring—a mother's heart! I said

I was proud of our American wives: I am ready to kneel in tears of thankfulness for our American mothers.

But let me get back from the mothers to the children. Our future electors and jurymen, and legislators, and judges, and magistrates, are the urchins who are now shouting and leaping around a thousand shops and school-houses. Shall their parents live in disregard of the duty they owe these budding minds? I am half disposed to undertake a sort of lectureship, from house to house, in order to persuade these fathers and mothers that, with all their affection, they are not sufficiently in earnest in making the most of their children. I would talk somehow in this way. "My good sir, or madam, how old is that boy? Very well; he is well grown for his age, and I hope you are keeping in mind that he will live in a different world from that in which you and I live. Bring him up accordingly. Lay upon him very early the gentle yoke of discipline. Guard him from evil companions. Save him from idleness, which is the muck-heap in which every rank, noisome weed of vice grows up. Put work into his hands, and make it his pleasure. Make him love home; and by all means encourage him to love his parents better than all other human beings

Allow me to beg that you will not fall into the absurd cant which some people, parrot-like, catch and echo, against book learning. Determine that this fellow shall know more than ever you have known; then he will be an honour to your declining years. Keep him at a good school; reward him with good books; and he will one day bless you for it. I know men in our legislature, who were brought up to hard work, and are now very rich; but they cannot utter a single sentence without disgracing themselves by some vulgar expression or some blunder in grammar. They know this, but have found it out too late. They feel that their influence is only half what it might have been, if their parents had only taken pains to have them well taught. Now look ahead, and give your child that sort of fortune which no reverse in trade can take away."

It is a great and prevalent error, that children may be left to run wild in every sort of street-temptation for several years, and that it will then be time enough to break them in. This horrid mistake makes half our spendthrifts, gamblers, thieves, and drunkards. No man would deal so with his garden or lot; no man would raise a colt or a puppy on such a principle. Take notice, parents, unless you till the new

soil, and throw in good seed, the devil will have a crop of poison-weeds before you know what is taking place. Look at your dear child, and think whether you will leave his safety or ruin at hazard.

XIV.

THE MECHANIC'S CHILDREN.

WHAT! more about the children? Yes; for they are to be the *men* of the coming age; and he has looked but drowsily at the signs of the times. who has not discerned that these little ones are to act in a world very different from our own. The question is, shall we prepare them for it?

These pauses in business, these cloudy days of distress, are given us for some end; perhaps as intervals of *consideration*. Let us then consider the ways and means of making something out of these beloved representatives of our very selves. Let us build something of the spars that float from our wreck; this will be our best speculation.

“ Let us know,
Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
When our deep plots do fail; and that should teach us
There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.”*

Sit down among your little children, and let me say a word to you about family-government. We

* Hamlet.

good people of America, in our race for self-government, are in danger of not governing ourselves. Our lads grow up insubordinate—finding out to our and their cost, that “it is a free country.” An English traveller could find no *boys* in the United States ; all being either children or men. The evil is undeniably on the increase. Parents are abandoning the reins ; and when once this shall have become universal, all sorts of government but despotism will be impracticable.

Take that froward child in hand at once, or you will soon have to be his suppliant rather than his guide. The old way was perhaps too rugged, where every thing was accomplished by mere dint of authority ; but the new way is as bad on the other side : no man is reduced to the necessity of choosing an extreme.

We often visit houses where the parents seem to be mere advisory attendants, with a painful sinecure. Let such hear the words of a wise Congressman of New Jersey, and a signer of the Declaration: “There is not a more disgusting sight than the impotent rage of a parent who has no authority. Among the lower ranks of people, who are under no restraints from decency, you may sometimes see a father or mother running out into the street after a child who has fled from them, with looks of fury and words of execration ; and

they are often stupid enough to imagine that neighbours or passengers will approve them in their conduct, though in fact it fills every beholder with horror." I am afraid none of us need go many rods from home to witness the like. What is commonly administered as reproof is often worse than nothing. Scolding rebukes are like scalding potions—they injure the patient. And angry chastisement is little better than oil on the fire. Not long since, I was passing by the railroad from Newark to New York. The train of cars pursued its furious way immediately by the door of a low "shanty," from which a small child innocently issued, and crossed the track before us just in time to escape being crushed by the locomotive. We all looked out with shuddering, when lo! the sturdy mother, more full of anger than alarm, strode forth, and seizing the poor infant, which had strayed only in consequence of her own negligence, gave it a summary and violent correction in the old-fashioned, inverse method Inference: parents often deserve the strokes they give.

Implicit obedience—and that without question, expostulation, or delay—is the keystone of the family arch. This is perfectly consistent with the utmost affection, and should be enforced from the beginning, and absolutely. The philosopher

whom I cited above says of parental authority : "I would have it *early* that it may be *absolute*, and absolute that it may not be *severe*. It holds universally in families and schools, and even the greater bodies of men, the army and navy, that those who keep the strictest discipline give the fewest strokes." Some parents seem to imagine that their failures in this kind arise from the want of a certain mysterious *knack*, of which they conceive themselves to be destitute. There is such a knack ; but it is as much within reach as the knack of driving a horse and chaise, or handling a knife and fork, and will never be got by yawning over it.

Not only love your children, but show that you love them ; not by merely fondling and kissing them, but by being always open to their approaches. Here is a man who drives his children out of his shop, because they pester him ; here is another who is always too busy to give them a good word. Now I would gladly learn of these penny-wise and pound-foolish fathers, what work they expect ever to turn out, which shall equal in importance the children who are now taking their mould for life. Hapless is that child which is forced to seek for companions more accessible and winning than its father or its mother.

You may observe that when a working man spends his leisure hours *abroad*, it is at the expense of his family. While he is at the club or the tavern, his boy or girl is seeking out-of-door connexions. The great school of juvenile vice is the STREET. Here the urchin, while he "knuckles down at law," learns the vulgar oath, or the putrid obscenity. For one lesson at the fireside, he has a dozen in the kennel. Here are scattered the seeds of falsehood, gambling, theft and violence. I pray you, as you love your own flesh and blood, make your children cling to the hearth-stone. Love home yourself; sink your roots deeply among your domestic treasures; set an example in this as in all things, which your offspring may follow. The garden-plant seems to have accomplished its great work, and is content to wither, when it has matured the fruit for the next race: learn a lesson from the plant.

XV.

THE MECHANIC IMPROVED BY LITERATURE.

* * * "Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least; else surely this man had not left
His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
But, as the mind was filled with inward light,
So not without distinction had he lived,
Beloved and honoured—far as he was known.
And something that may serve to set in view
The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
His observations, and the thoughts his mind
Had dealt with—I will here record."

WORDSWORTH.

IN the belief that the common mind in every age is best reached by parables, I have sometimes indulged in a little fiction; always, however, using the invention only as the embroidered veil of truth; and drawing up the curtain in time for the serious performance. But this license has made it necessary that in what I am about to relate I should declare every jot and tittle of the story to be absolute fact, to the best of my knowledge and recollection. Having kept no memoranda, I may be in error as to a date, or the exact

succession of events, but the statements may be relied on as in every main point true.

It is now more than twenty-three years since I became acquainted with a coach-painter in a village of New Jersey. At that time he occupied a very small shop adjacent to a larger building which was used by the coach-maker. Even in early youth I was led to observe something in the manner and countenance of this man, indicative of superior reflection. I shall conceal his name under that of AUGUST, which will point him out to many who knew him. As I advanced in life, I gained access to his painting-room and his dwelling; and as he was particularly kind to young persons, I passed in his company some of the pleasantest hours which it is my fortune to remember. August was then in the prime of life, and his character and habits were fully unfolded. In looking back upon the acquaintances of many years, I can declare with sincerity, that I have never known a more accomplished man. In his trade he was exemplary and approved. His taste led him to make excursions beyond the sphere of his daily work; and I call to mind a number of portraits and fancy-pieces which ornamented his own house and the apartments of his friends. I am not prepared to say, however, that he was eminent as an artist. But there were va-

rious other walks of life in which he was a master. He was fond of reading to a degree which wholly interfered with the care of his business and his health. Indeed, he was a devourer of books. Attached to his easel one was sure to find an open volume; and sometimes he caused a favourite boy to read aloud while he was grinding his colours. I well remember that, on a certain day when he had to walk five miles to do a piece of work, he travelled the whole distance book in hand; it was a quarto volume of Hobhouse's Travels.

There was nothing in the whole circle of English literature, so far as it is traversed by most professed scholars, with which August was not familiar. He had made himself master of the French language, spoke it with some facility, and had perused its chief treasures. Among other evidences of his application, he put into my hands a laborious translation from the French, of a work by Latude, detailing the events of his long and cruel imprisonment; a narrative not unlike that of Baron Trenck. In my youth I read this with avidity; and some years later, on the death of August, I endeavoured to obtain the manuscript from his widow, with a view to its publication for her benefit. We were, however, so raw in the matter of book-making, as to con-

clude that the public taste would not warrant the adventure. Many years since, an English translation of the same memoirs has been published in Great Britain. I have vividly before my mind the scene, when August was busy with his palette, in a rude loft, and a little boy seated on a work-bench was pouring into his delighted ear the early fictions of the author of *Waverley*. Sir Walter himself would have been repaid by the spectacle.

Such tastes and habits gave a richness to his mind, and a refinement to his manners. August was fully suited to mingle with any group of scientific or literary men. His love of talk was unbounded, and his hilarity most genial. I remember no acquaintance whose discourse was more stimulating or instructive. — Many an hour of summer days I whiled away in his shop, listening to the sentiment, humour, and wit, which would have graced any company I ever met. All this was without a trace of self-conceit or arrogance. His conversation was the easy overflowing of a full mind. It was always animated, and always arch: there was a twinkle of unutterable mirth in his expressive eye, which won regard and awakened expectation.

August was a musician. This delightful art had been his solace from childhood. He played

on several instruments, but the clarionet was that of which he had the greatest mastery. Often have I heard its clear melodious tones for successive hours on a summer evening. He seemed to use it as the outlet for those musings which found no vent among his ordinary associations; for most of his performances were voluntaries and fitful *capriccios*. Yet he was a sight-singer, and read even intricate music with ease. It was one of his whims to have a number of flageolets, lessening by degrees until the smallest was a mere bird-pipe, with the ventages almost too near together for adult fingers. Such is the power of association, that to this very day I sometimes amuse myself with that feeblest of all instruments, a French flageolet, in affectionate recollection of poor August.

I have heard that he sometimes wrote verses, but have never been so fortunate as to alight on any specimen. August was a man of poetic tendencies, living habitually above the defiling influences of a sordid world, and seeking his pleasures in a region beyond the visible horizon of daily scenes. In this connexion, I ought with great seriousness to mention, that during all the years of my acquaintance with him, he was an open professor of Christian faith, which he exemplified by a life of purity, patience, and benevo-

lence. His family was a religious household. When he came to enter the valley of poignant trial with which his life terminated, he is said to have evinced great joyfulness of confidence in the propitiation and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

These scattered memorials of a friend of my youth are grateful to my feelings in the delivery, but are given with the higher intention of inciting young mechanics to seek the same cultivation of mind. What was there in the case of August which should deter any young man of ordinary parts from attempting to gain the same eminence? He was a man of the people; he was under the necessity of daily labour for his support; yet he made himself respected by the most accomplished scholars around him, as a man of mental culture. There was no magic in this. Do as he did, and you will have the same respectability, the same pleasures, and, perhaps, the same knowledge. Seek your pleasures in mental pursuits; discipline your intellect; READ—READ—READ—and you will find yourself soon in a new world.

XVI.

THE MECHANIC'S DOG AND GUN.

Nothing can be more natural, than that a man of sedentary and confined pursuits should feel a strong attraction to sports of the field. It has been so in all countries and in every age. The freedom of traversing the open country, in fine weather, with a sense of leisure, and the buoyant excitement of expected trophies, has something which enchants a mind at ease. And it cannot be denied, that when taken in moderation, the amusement and exercise of the sportsman are highly productive of vigorous health. The American, restrained by no game-laws, and enjoying a state of social confidence, which in most cases prevents any vindictive action in cases of trespass, is led to exercise his prerogative; hence many addict themselves to this recreation, who have no great taste for its labours.

There is something independent and athletic in the pursuit of game, and this is particularly enchanting to those who are most of their time condemned to employments within doors, which

afford little active exercise to the limbs. It is the same principle which fills our volunteer companies with working men; the great majority, and the most zealous members, are commonly from trades which are the least manly. When a boy has a fowlingpiece on his shoulder, and a trusty dog gamboling before him, he feels exalted into manhood; and we are all children of a larger growth.

After all, these field-sports are not to my mind. I am not prepared to denounce them as cruel and iniquitous, or to debar the young mechanic from all indulgence in them; but they are seductive pleasures, and in our region bring in their train some very undesirable consequences. If a man is an indifferent marksman, it is a poor business, producing little fruit, and much weariness and chagrin; and many days must be expended before great dexterity can be attained. If, on the other hand, one is what Miss Sinclair calls "a horse-and-dog man," he becomes engrossed in the pursuit, and neglects his business. To say truth, I cannot now call to mind any mechanic remarkable as a good shot, or very successful in bagging game, who was not at the same time distinguished for indolence in his proper calling, or for some frivolity of manner, or looseness of habits. Every fair day yields a temptation to forsake the shop for the field. The enthusiasm

of the chase must be high to ensure success : and when high it scarcely admits of sudden checks. One day of capital sport is no more satisfactory than one glass of exhilarating liquor ; it incites to another experiment ; and thus I have known days and weeks squandered by men whose business was languishing at home.

The dog and gun introduce the young man to strange companions ; and the more, as his skill makes progress. In every town or village, there are found a number of prime fellows, who have learned all the capabilities of the Joe Manton and percussion cap, and are very Nimrods in the field. Such persons naturally become the patrons and oracles of the inchoate sportsman. Such a worthy I have known for many years, and his influence has been only evil upon two or three generations of amateur fowlers.

NED NICHOL was a watchmaker in some ancient day ; for he is now on the wrong side of sixty. His ruinous house has a wing which is never opened to the street ; the closed windows used to show an array of watches and silver spoons, but he seldom enters it except to deposit his accoutrements, or to file and tinker at the lock of his gun. Around his door one seldom fails to see three or four setters or pointers, duly trained, and for laziness fit emblems of their master. All

other faculties in Ned's nature seem to have been absorbed by the faculty of following game. He has ceased to pique himself on his ability; it has become an instinct. No doubt he could load and fire in his sleep; as indeed I knew him on one occasion to bring down a woodcock while he was falling over a broken fence.

Ned is sometimes descried in the dun of the morning sauntering forth in a shooting-jacket of many colours. His appointments, like the Indian's, are for use, not show. His game-bag is capacious, and as he despises the coxcombry of patent flasks and chargers, he has slung around him a gigantic horn, which he has decorated in a whimsical manner. Two or three dogs are playing in circles before him, and evince far more life than their leader. Ned's impulse is pure love of sport and of the fields. The wilderness of swamps and glens has been his Paradise. What he bags is never talked about or offered in the market. He is of course a venerable character in the eyes of all young fowlers. As a dog-trainer he is unrivalled, and this secures him the attendance of a group of gaping loungers, who consign to him the education of their puppies. When a crazy fire-lock labours under some almost immedicable disease, it is carried to Ned; and hence, on a summer's noon, when he sits under his great

shady willow washing his gun or worming his dogs, he is sure to be encircled by inquirers. The shadow of this tree is his dispensary.

Strange to say, though everybody recognises Ned Nichol as a good-for-nothing knave, it is the ambition of a score of would-be sportsmen to imitate and accompany him. The young mechanics who follow him at humble distance, need only raise their eyes to his tatters and his tangled locks, to behold what they will become, if their idle aspirations prove successful.

The wise mechanic will *scorn* to be a poor shot and *dread* to be a good one. The passion for this sport becomes a mania, and ruins multitudes. It does not admit of partial devotion; it cannot be indulged for mere hours, but for whole days, and for day after day. Then how paltry a sight is it to see a full-grown man coming home weary at night, with a few poor robins, a half-grown squirrel, and a solitary snipe—slain on the ground! It is a far different thing in a wild, hunting country, where there is abundance of deer and wild turkeys. Here the use of the rifle becomes a necessary means of livelihood, and the pack of hounds is an indispensable part of one's stock. Not for a moment would I throw into the same class the fowler of our Atlantic towns and the frank hunter of the West. There is something

at once picturesque and sublime in the fortunes of these frontier men ; and their sports are lordly. But there is something inglorious in the grave pursuit of tomtits.

Shooting-matches, where a number of harmless pigeons are let out to be scared to death by the competing heroes, in some green meadow, with liquors and refreshments spread under the trees, are scenes of rude clamour, and usually end in drunken brawls. I scarcely know why, but it is an unquestionable fact, that great attachment to the dog and gun is usually coupled with other loose pursuits. The famous sportsman is sometimes a black-leg, and often a tippler. Other flasks than those for powder are wont to stick out of the shooter's pocket. To be brief and candid—if you desire the reputation of a thriving artisan, avoid that of a capital shot.

XVII.

THE MECHANIC'S MORNINGS.

“Falsely luxurious, will not man arise
And, leaping from the bed of sloth, enjoy
The cool, the fragrant, and the silent morn,
To meditation due and sacred song.”

THOMSON.

It was Franklin, if I mistake not, who uttered the adage, “If a man lie in bed late, he may trot after his business all day, and never overtake it.” There is no class of men concerning whom this is more true than mechanics. Indeed, it is so generally received as a maxim, that any working man’s character for thrift is gone if he is not an early riser. In regard to mere enjoyment, it is something to add an hour or two of conscious existence to every day of life. It matters not whether we make our days longer, our years longer, or the sum total of days and years longer: in each case life is by so much prolonged. By making this addition at the better end of every day, we gain much in the quality of what is redeemed. An hour before breakfast is commonly worth two

afterwards. The whole day is apt to take the colour of the morning. There are certain things which, if not done early in the morning, are likely to be left undone altogether. Late risers are usually indolent. "Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty." Late rising is also conjoined with slovenliness in every kind of performance.

The luxury of early rising is a mystery to the uninitiated. People of quality deny themselves the very choicest portion of a summer day.

"Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds."

What can be lovelier than the aspect of nature at sunrise, during the season of flowers? No man knows any thing about the music of birds who has not heard their performances between dawn and sunrise. No man appreciates the unbought odours of the vegetable world, who has not quaffed them at this hour. Let any one who has been so unfortunate as to keep his bed at this enchanting season of the day, henceforth amend his habits. He will find himself in a new world. The current of his thoughts will flow more healthfully and purely. After rising early, I have often thought that I was in a better humour with myself and others all the succeeding day. This is the suitable time for planning out the day's

work. No thriving man can live without method and foresight; and these are but names, where indolence robs us of the day's prime. Every man of business knows how idle it is for a master to indulge in sleep in the expectation that his subordinates will at the same time be diligently employed.

The duty of making the most of every day should be inculcated on children. Let the habit be well fixed, and it will never leave them. Whatever may be the change in their circumstances, and however they may affect more delicate fashions, they will never be able to forget the elasticity and fragrance of their boyish mornings: nor ever prefer the sickly damps of a hot bed to the refreshing breezes of dawn.

Under another head I will give an instance or two of surprising attainments in learning, made in early hours redeemed from sleep, by labouring men. In every thing that concerns the mind, the morning is invaluable. After the repose and corroboration of sleep, the spirits are new-made, and the faculties act with twofold alacrity. Hence the ancient proverb, *Aurora is a friend to the Muses*. On this account, I would venture to commend to mechanics the practice of getting all their pecuniary accounts into proper order before breakfast. It is well known that many in-

dustrious and sober men get behindhand in their affairs, simply because their books become deranged. This derangement frequently arises from the great hurry of business during the day, which prevents a leisurely settlement. Where a man is not much versed in arithmetic and book-keeping, these settlements are somewhat serious affairs, and cannot be duly performed at a counter among customers, or in the hum of a busy shop. Let the master-mechanic rise an hour earlier than is usual, for this very purpose. He will then have unbroken time for his accounts; and will be able, with great satisfaction, to enter on the day's work, with the feeling that his papers and books are in a good state. A little of this every morning will soon make itself felt; constant dropping wears away the rock. This practice is immensely better than that of leaving this ugly job until night, when there is an urgent temptation to neglect it altogether. I need not say that the practice of posting one's books on Sunday is at once profane and injurious.

Let me quote Milton; for it is a part of my creed, that the great masterpieces of human genius are a part of the working man's inheritance. Some one had spoken of the poet's morning haunts: he replies with just indignation: "These morning haunts are where they should

be, at home ; not sleeping, or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring, in winter often ere the sound of any bell to awaken men to labour or to devotion ; in summer as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its full fraught." For the same, or other purposes, such as our business may render important, let us shake off slumber, and enjoy the happiest hours of the twenty-four.

The influence of early rising upon health may have been overrated by zealots, yet none can deny the great salubrity of the practice. Too much sleep is relaxing to the animal fibre, and instead of rendering one less drowsy through the day, is often observed to induce a lethargic state of mind and body. Early rising presupposes good hours at night ; and these afford a good security to health as well as morals. It is too often the case, that young mechanics, after a day of hard work, give themselves the license of passing many hours of the night in street-walking, carousing, or tavern-haunting.

There is one class of duties still to be mentioned, which demands the proper use of the morning hours ; I mean the exercises of devotion. The cry echoes every morning from the

turrets of Mohammedan mosques, *Prayer is better than sleep!* *Prayer is better than sleep!* The man, whether rich or poor, who never communes with God and with his own heart, lives like a brute. Natural religion may suffice to teach us that our first thoughts are due to God. In this connexion, one cannot but be reminded of the brilliant passage of the Shakspeare of preachers: "When the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by-and-by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the brow of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because he himself had seen the face of God; and still, while a man tells the story, the sun gets higher and higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day."*

Amidst the fragrance and sabbath quiet of morning, all nature allures us to serious and thankful consideration. When the beautiful face of the world, refreshed by the moisture and the coolness of night, bursts once more upon our view, it is a dictate of every good feeling within

* Jeremy Taylor.

us, to elevate our hearts to our Creator and Redeemer. The devout and rational soul will say :

“ Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
To hill or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
Hail ! universal Lord ! be bounteous still
To give us only good ; and if the night
Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.”

XVIII.

THE MECHANIC'S FRIENDS.

It is a wise direction of a certain philosopher, that every man, as he advances in life, should contract new friendships among men younger than himself. The reason is obvious. Every year lessens the circle of our youthful coevals, and the old man often finds himself going down the hill of life absolutely bereft of every friend of his boyhood. We must therefore do what we can to repair these wastes, and indemnify ourselves for those heavy losses.

A celebrated poet has given us a memorable verse on this subject: *Poor is the friendless master of a world!* But this is only the voice of all history, philosophy, and song, as well as of the proverbs of all ages and nations. One of the loveliest productions of the most eloquent of Romans is on the subject of Friendship; and when we moralize, we are all apt to harp on the same string.

The mechanic needs, no less than other men, the solace and profit of friendly connexions; and

yet I fear the value of this treasure is sometimes overlooked in our hurry to gain wealth. The love of money being a root of all evil, produces a great harm in this very direction. It is a selfish passion ; and all selfish passions narrow and sear the heart. Therefore it is, that we look more readily for warm friendships in the simple scenes of rural and pastoral society.

Let me indulge my humour by recording sketches of two very dissimilar characters. There was a thriving silversmith in our village in years gone by. He was a moral and industrious man, and a clever workman ; so that he rapidly gathered a little property, sufficient to make him comfortable for life. HARPER, for so I shall call him, was a bachelor, and had no kinsfolk in our neighbourhood but a mother and two sisters, with whom he resided. He was regular in his engagements, and punctual in every part of business. You were sure to meet him at a certain hour at market and at church. But it was observed that he never appeared in company. His walks were always solitary. He visited nobody ; and nobody visited him. So it continued to be, year after year, until he became a grey-headed man. Yet he was said, by those who sometimes called on his family, to be pleasant enough in his own house. I never heard a whisper of any unkind-

ness between him and his mother or sisters. Still he was a friendless man. Without being positively surly, he was selfish. He had his pleasures and his pains all to himself. True, he hurt no one; but he helped no one. As well might he have lived on Crusoe's island, for any contribution that he made to the stock of social enjoyment.

Harper was not a misanthrope; yet he had no tenderness for his fellow men. He confided nothing to them, and he sought not their confidence. The next-door neighbour might be sick in bed, but Harper visited him not. He seemed to indulge a proud independence, and to seek nothing so much as to be let alone. This will not do in such a world as ours. The trait is unamiable, and, I doubt not, usually meets with a retribution in Providence. As Harper grew older, his habits became more rigid. He had enjoyed the kind offices of his female relations so long, that he had forgotten that they were not immortal. His aged mother died. This gave him a severe shock, but did not alter his habits; he only clung more closely to the survivors. After a few years, the younger of his sisters married and removed to the West. The brother and remaining sister were now inseparable; but at length this sister fell into a decline, and finally died. Poor Harper had

made no provision for such a state of things. He had become rich, but his wealth could not brighten his long melancholy evenings. He was friendless; even if he had been willing to seek new alliances, he had outlived the ductile period when friendship takes its mould. His latter days were cheerless; he sank in hopeless melancholy; and when he died, I presume there was no human creature who felt the loss, even for a moment.

I gladly change the subject, for the sake of introducing another mechanic, JOSEPH RITSON. Joseph is still living, and with as much enjoyment of life as any man I have ever known. He also is industrious and successful, but after another sort. His maxim has been that of Solomon: "He that is a friend must show himself friendly." Joseph is one whom you would sooner love than revere. He has marked faults, but they are on the side of frankness and generosity. If any inhabitant of our village should be asked, "What man of your acquaintance has most friends?" I doubt not the unhesitating reply would be, "Joseph Ritson."

Several sets of apprentices have issued from his shop, to all of whom he stands almost in the relation of a father. He has made it his business to seek out promising young lads, and help them on in the world. In every one of these he will

find a fast friend. No day passes in which he may not be seen going with a hearty, open countenance into the houses of the neighbours; and his face always carries a sort of sunshine with it. His own house is the abode of hospitality. Indeed he has harboured more travellers, and lodged more strangers, than any man I ever knew. There is not a poor family in our neighbourhood who is not acquainted with him. When any one is sick, Joseph is sure to find it out, and to be on the spot before the minister, and often before the doctor. Whenever a man falls into trouble, he resorts, by a kind of instinct, to Joseph Ritson. In consequence of this temper, he is, I confess, often imposed upon; but what then? he has vastly more enjoyment than if he never made a mistake. Business crowds upon him rather too fast, for he is executor to half a dozen estates, and is really overladen with other people's affairs. But then he has his reward. Man is made for affectionate intercourse. Joseph is always enjoying the genial flow of kindly emotions. Every day he feels the warm grasp from hands of those whom he has befriended. As he advances in life, he will find himself surrounded by those who love him, and who will be the friends of his children after him. Besides this, he possesses the un-

speaking satisfaction which arises from the exercise of true benevolence.

I trust these lines will not be altogether lost upon young mechanics. They should early learn the value of real friendship; not that which is cemented by association in vice, and always ruinous; nor that which springs from indiscriminate and jovial intercourse; but such as is the fruit of wise selection, founded on cordial esteem. I would say to the young man—fail not to have a small circle of true friends. Choose your own companions, and do not allow yourself to be the intimate of every one who may choose you. Beware of immoral comrades. The man who is not true to his own conscience, will never be true to you. Shun the man who has even once been guilty of falsehood. Cultivate no friendship over strong drink. “Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.” Be slow in choosing a friend, but once chosen do not forsake him for slight faults. One friend of your boyhood is worth a dozen of later growth. And make it your purpose to stand by a friend to the very last drop of your blood.

XIX.

THE MECHANIC'S CHANGE OF TRADE.

THERE is something in the homespun philosophy of UNCLE BENJAMIN which always secures my attention. Rude as it is, it has that strength which is often wanting in schools and books. Uncle Benjamin has never read Lord Chesterfield, and, therefore, has not learned how exceedingly vulgar it is to use a common proverb; indeed, these concentrated morsels of wisdom, handed down from father to son, form a considerable portion of his discourse. Poor Richard is his favourite author, and if his son Sammy has not become a ripe proverbialist, it is his own fault.

I regret to say that Sammy is sadly destitute of thrift. Being disappointed in the trade to which he was brought up, he has been thinking of a change to some other business. But no sooner did the old man hear of this freak, than he hobbled over to his son's as fast as his legs and staff would carry him, and without ceremony opened the business thus :

“Ah, Sammy, so you are going to break ground in a new place, and begin life over again!”

“Why, yes, father: I make out so poorly at my trade, and the times are so hard.”

“Let the times alone, Sammy. They will be as bad, I dare say, for your new trade. The fault is not in the horse but the rider: not in the trade but the tradesman. You will run through many callings before you outrun laziness. Look about you, and see if you can find one man who has bettered himself by forsaking his business. We have many such; jacks-of-all-trades and masters of none. You know the old saw, ‘the rolling stone gathers no moss.’ My advice to you is, to go forward in the road you are in: it is waste of life to open a new road and take a fresh start every few years.”

“But, father,” said Sammy, “the times are altered, and there are new chances for rising in the world. A great many of my acquaintances are growing tired of being little country-mechanics. I am not alone in my notions.”

“Perhaps not, Sammy. If all fools wore white caps, we should look like a flock of geese: most of our working men seem bitten by the gadfly of change. But they may turn and turn, and gain nothing until they change their habits.

With a good trade, good health, good habits, and a good wife, any man may grow wealthy. But pray what is to become of a man's seven years' apprenticeship, when he goes into a new business?—Would you throw this into the sea?"

"O, no, father! That would be all loss, if I were going to slave it again at the anvil; but I mean only to superintend the work of others."

"That indeed!" cried the old man. "I begin to see your drift. You are going to leave a trade to which you were bred, for one of which you know little or nothing. You are going from an old business, in which you have to work with your own hands, to a new one in which you expect to play master. And are you so green, Sammy, as to think it requires no skill to oversee the work of others? Look at our gentlemen-farmers, when they come out of the cities, and see in what style they superintend the work. No, no! take an old man's word for it, unless you stick to your last, you may expect to go barefoot. One may decant liquor from vessel to vessel till there be nothing left. Let well enough alone. You have every thing but perseverance; now have that. Remember the epitaph, 'I was well—took physic—and here I am.' I have often heard it said, that three removes are as bad as a fire: it is as true of trades as of tene-

ments. Remove an old tree and it will wither to death. To make such a change is at best but bartering certainty for hope. Your bright prospects may turn out like those of the country-mouse: you remember the fable."

The conversation of the old man put me on a recollection of the cases which have occurred in our own neighbourhood, and I believe uncle Benjamin is in the right. I have seen the rise and progress of some hundreds of working men. Where they have stuck to their business, observing economy, and adding little to little, they have in almost every case arrived at comfortable substance. On the other hand, where they have been restless and versatile, even though these changes seemed to be for the better, they have, usually, lost all, and died beggars. In this free country, mechanics are not bound down by legal restrictions to the trade which they have learned, but may exchange one line of business for another, at their pleasure: and there are many temptations to do so, particularly when the times are unfavourable. It is the more necessary, therefore, to inculcate the principle that, as a general rule, perseverance ensures success, and change brings disaster. Men of lively genius often grow weary of the dull routine of business, and are tempted to forsake the beaten track upon new ad-

ventures; while your dull plodding fellows are laying a foundation for lasting wealth and usefulness. Hence the erroneous adage, that fortune favours fools. Sparkling qualities and elastic enterprise are not always coupled with practical wisdom.

Let me give the name of RUPERT to a man whom I formerly knew. His case is that of hundreds. He was indented to a harness-maker, with whom he served his time without any remarkable occurrence. He was considered very clever in his trade, and lived with his first employer about a year as a journeyman. At the end of this time, he thought fit to leave his former calling, in order to open a shop for the sale of glazed leather caps and similar articles. Having little capital and less perseverance, he had not been more than a twelvemonth in this occupation, before papers were seen in the windows, purporting that the stock was selling off, &c., and shortly thereafter the house was closed. For several weeks Rupert walked the streets, in the manner usual with those who do nothing because they cannot pay their creditors. When I next observed him, he was again labouring as a journeyman, but this did not last long, as he soon appeared among us as the agent of a line of stage-coaches. After acting his part for a few months

in this vocation, he was enabled by one or two of his friends to set up a shop for ready-made clothing; and we really thought he was about to manage prosperously. But his unstable temper again betrayed him. Just about this juncture, certain new resources were developed in the water-power of our creek, and several mills and manufactories were enterprised. Rupert became a partner in a paper-making establishment; was once more embarrassed; sunk in the stream; and after a suitable time, arose upon the surface in the new character of a lottery-agent. This gambling employment finally ruined him. It brought him into acquaintance with idlers, sportsmen, and black-legs. He became well known upon the turf. His whole appearance and dress were changed, for it may be observed that sporting characters strangely choose to be conspicuous. When I saw him last, he was on his way to Long Island races. He wore a white hat, plush vest, green broad-tailed, single-breasted coat, with fancy buttons, coloured stock; and had a whale-bone wand in his hand, a paltry large ring on his finger, and a would-be cameo, as large as a half-dollar, on the soiled bosom of his striped shirt. Every feature and every motion indicated uneasiness and drink.

How was this catastrophe to have been avoided?

The answer is simple : by sticking to the shop. Keep your shop and your shop will keep you. The patriarch Jacob gives his eldest son a very bad name : “ Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.”* It is the character and the lot of many a young mechanic. There are some employments which seem to lie open as snug harbours for those who have failed of all other ports. They are occupations which are supposed, whether truly or falsely, to need no foregoing apprenticeship. In country villages, it is too common to imagine that any man is fit to be an apothecary, though our very life may depend on a druggist's knowledge of pharmacy, and though more than one has sold arsenic for magnesia. Most men have talents sufficient for vending confectionary or old clothes. Tavern-keepers are seldom such as have been bred to the craft ; though our best hosts are certainly those who have grown up in the bar. The same may be said of bar-keepers, booking-clerks, and travelling agents. The hawkers, and other travellers who go about so importunately with subscription-papers, pictures, German-silver spoons, or cheap books, wrapped up in greasy pocket handkerchiefs, have all seen other days, and would even now do better, if they would return to their proper

* Gen. xlix. 4.

calling. The worst of it is, this is the last thing they ever think of doing. Who was ever known to re-marry a divorced wife? The only safety is in dogged perseverance. Industry and time will wear away all the little disquietudes which prompt to change.

XX.

THE MECHANIC IN CELIBACY.

WITHOUT going to the extreme of him who compared an old bachelor to the odd half of a pair of snuffers, I have always looked upon this specimen of human nature as something out of the way, and pitiable. To the honour of mechanics, be it said, that they are more rarely in celibacy than men of other callings. He who works hard for his living finds abundant evidence that it is not good for man to be alone. Nevertheless, we now and then fall in with a veteran bachelor even among this class. As I am persuaded that truth is more attractive than fiction, all the world over, I will gratify my fondness for portrait by giving a half-length of my old acquaintance LUKE PEARMAIN.

Luke—for I love to be particular—is a last-maker, and learned his trade in a shop in Tooley street, within stone's throw of the old London bridge; now, alas! no more. He has room enough for a single man, for besides a front-shop, back-room, kitchen, and shed, he has two good

chambers and a garret. Moreover, he owns the house, and about an acre of land appurtenant to it. The reader has observed the tendency in all Benedicts towards punctuality, nay punctilio. They get a set, and crystallize in a rigid form. Luke is the most regular of men. Long since he has ceased to feel the need of severe labour, so that it is only by fits and starts that he works in his shop; indeed he has few calls, and the windows are half the time closed. He is by no means an extreme case, and I select him as a fair average specimen.

On Sundays he is one of the earliest at church, whither he repairs exactly once a day, and deposits in the proper receptacle exactly one cent. No eloquence ever thawed him into an enlargement of his charity. He is six feet high, erect, and spare in figure, with a rough, healthy ruddiness on his cheeks; and as he has that sandy hair which wears best with time, he shows not a gray lock, though he must be above sixty. In his apparel he is scrupulously clean, and his coarse shoes are well polished; but the cut of his garments is antique. His carefulness and ease of motion are such that dress lasts with him a long time. His brown surtout with metal buttons has appeared every Sunday for ten years. A tailor not long since pointed out to me a summer coat

upon Luke's back, as an article which he had himself made twenty years ago.

This honest man is not at all morose or snappish in his salutations or discourse; he is only *particular*. Yet living by one's self engenders selfishness, and a man must have a warm heart, if it is not congealed by forty years of bachelorhood. Luke buys little, and gives nothing, though he sometimes has money to lend. He has few visitors, and makes no calls, except at a few shops. He has a housekeeper, with whom he sometimes takes a formal drive, on a fair afternoon, in a gig which looks as if he might have made it himself, drawn by a bony horse, whose age nobody knows. But he is evidently very shy of the woman, and never manifests any recognition of the existence of children, unless they make undue noise about his door. His sitting-room is decorated with an old map of London, and a print of Westminster Abbey; and I have seen him reading *Tristram Shandy* with his spectacles on.

If any grave person now inquire what the moral of all this may be, I reply, it is not a fable but a true description. Yet it has its moral, and this I shall humbly endeavour to unfold. I scarcely ever meet Luke Pearmain without re-

flecting on the advantages of happy wedlock. His staid and precise demeanour cannot altogether mask a certain unsatisfied air which he always carries with him. Luke is not happy. Natural dispositions may be greatly stunted in their growth, but cannot be altogether eradicated : and when the social principles of our nature are suppressed, it is at a great expense. The process is gradual, and cannot be perceived in youth, but its effects are very manifest in a course of years. No man can go on through a long period, caring only for himself, without having many of the generous and nobler sensibilities of his nature deadened. It is often thought that a bachelor escapes many of the vexations of life. So he does ; but at the same time he loses some of its most excellent lessons. He has no sick wife, with whose repeated sorrows to condole ; but it were better for him if he had. Tears of conjugal sympathy are blessed in their softening effects on the heart. He has no children to give him perpetual anxiety ; but if he had, he would find his best affections enlarged and clarified by flowing forth among beloved objects.

An old man, without wife or children, is like an old leafless trunk ; when he dies, his memorial is gone forever ; he has none to bury him, or to

represent him. Look at Luke Pearmain. His long evenings are dreary, and he hastens to bed; thus constraining himself to rise before cock-crow. What a different sight is witnessed next door. There is old JOHN SCUDDER, quite as old a man, and much feebler, as well as poorer; but ten times happier. He has had many a buffeting with hard times, has lost one eye, and followed four children to the grave; but see him on a winter's evening! The very remembrance of the scene does me good. There he sits in his stuffed arm-chair, by the glowing grate; his wife knitting by his side; his children around him at their books or work; his grandchildren climbing up his knees; or in the summer twilight, as he smokes his pipe under the oak-tree before his door, and chats with every old acquaintance.

Even beggars learn that they fare but ill at the doors of bachelors. Domestic troubles teach us to be compassionate. When a man so narrows himself as to present scarcely any mark for the shafts of adversity, he commonly lessens his benevolence in the same proportion. Besides, who can calculate the effect produced on the mind, manners, and heart of any man, by the intercourse of many years, with a gentle, loving, virtuous woman? In fine, there is no greater token of the

prosperity of America, than the facts—that all things around us conspire to encourage early wedlock ;—that among our yeomanry marriages are seldom contracted for money ;—and that we have our choice among thousands of the loveliest and purest women in the world.

XXI.

THE MECHANIC'S TABLE.

LET me say a word about the mechanic's meat and drink. Here there are two extremes to be avoided, namely those of *too little* and *too much*. And first of the first. It may seem strange that any man should need to be cautioned against too meager a diet; yet such is really the case, in consequence of the fanatical hoax of certain grandame writers on Hygiene, and certain errant preachers turned quacks. Every one who is acquainted with the environs of London, has heard of the "Horns of Highgate," which used to be kept at each of the nineteen public houses of that suburb. There, in ancient times, the wayfaring man used to be "sworn on the horns," that he would not eat brown bread while he could get white, unless he liked the brown best; nor drink small beer while he could get strong, unless he liked the small the best. Among the "old ale knights of England," there were none who could not safely take this oath; but we have changed all this; and the American doctrine, among a cer-

tain class, is, that white bread is poison, and flesh an abomination. Many a man, whose mouth waters for a savoury chop or steak, is, by the stress of humbug, kept upon a lenten regimen for year after year, living on bran bread and vegetables.

The mischief is greatest among those who need the sustenance of generous viands—working men, and often invalids, to whom, in this land of plenty, a kind Providence has given an abundant variety of flesh and fowl. Some good people, having had their consciences schooled awry, believe the slaughter of animals to be akin to murder. They have, in their reading of Scripture, omitted the grant made to Noah: “Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; *even as the green herb have I given you all things.*” Gen. ix. 3.

The entrance of one of these modern Pythagorean teachers, to the kitchen or table of a mechanic, produces the same effects as the wand of a certain doctor in Sancho Panza’s island. Among pallid young ladies the system has great vogue; as also with dyspeptical matrons, and hypochondriacs of all classes. The converts profess to return to *natural food*, and eschew all artificial preparations. Swift must have had them in his eye when he said of a former race of herb-eaters,

“I am told many of them are now thinking of turning their children into woods to graze with the cattle, in hopes to raise a healthy and moral race, refined from the corruptions of this luxurious world.”

In seriousness, let me dissuade every man who values his health, from trying experiments on so delicate a subject as the human constitution. The experience of many centuries has sufficiently evinced the fitness of a temperate animal diet to preserve our powers in good order. Many generations of sound and stalwart meat-eaters have lived to a good old age. The learned physiologist, Dr. Pritchard, has shown by numerous examples, that the nations which subsist wholly on vegetable food, cannot compare in robust health and muscular strength with the rest of mankind; and any one who has seen a tribe of the South Western Indians, who live exclusively on flesh, will find it hard to believe that it is a deleterious article of food. I plead only for a judicious mixture, and against the senseless clamours of charlatan lecturers.

It merits the particular consideration of working men, that in the statistical reports rendered to the Parliament of Great Britain from the manufacturing districts, the want of proper animal food is mentioned as a chief source of infantile

disease, scrofula, and premature decrepitude. No work on philosophy, as connected with diet, has received a more deserved popularity than Dr. Combe's treatise on "Digestion and Dietetics." This able physician and sound philosopher writes thus: "As a general rule, animal food is more easily and speedily digested, and contains a greater quantity of nutriment in a given bulk, than either herbaceous or farinaceous food." And again he says of vegetable substances: "to a person undergoing hard labour, they afford inadequate support." He also maintains, with our countryman Dr. Beaumont, that the *reason* of this is to be sought in the "adaptation of animal food to the properties of the gastric juice provided by nature for its solution." But I am beginning to talk too much like a doctor.

The wise mechanic will be careful to provide for his family and workmen a sufficiency of such food as is in season, provided the experience of the country declare it to be wholesome; without joining in a crusade against any accredited article of diet. Providence has given to us, in great profusion, both the fruits of the earth and the beasts of the field; let us make a temperate use of these bounties. I would banish from the table the intoxicating glass, but at the same time

would welcome the rich variety of good things which adorn our American market.

I am now ready to pass to the other extreme, namely, that of *too much*. This, it will be readily acknowledged, is by far the more common. As it regards animal food, there is surely a golden mean between eating too much and eating none at all. There is no civilized nation which devours more flesh than our own. While the peasantry of Europe have meat on their tables, in some countries about once a month, in others about once a week, the labourers of the United States indulge in animal food every day, and often at every meal. This is greatly overdoing the matter; and the stimulating effects of such excess is witnessed in the inflammatory and febrile disorders which prevail.—Besides, it is common for men who work hard to eat by far too much of what is set before them.

“Intemperate eating,” says Professor Caldwell, “is perhaps the most universal fault we commit. We are guilty of it, not occasionally, but habitually, and almost uniformly, from the cradle to the grave. For every reeling drunkard that disgraces our country, it contains one hundred gluttons—persons, I mean, who eat to excess, and suffer by the practice. Like the ox in rich pasture-ground, or the swine at his swill-

trough, men stow away their viands until they have neither desire nor room for any more." This gorging of the stomach probably slays as many as strong drink. And this eating *too much* arises, in great measure, from a practice which is unfortunately a disgrace to our whole nation, I mean eating *too fast*. This prevents necessary mastication, and of course healthful digestion. It carries the eater far beyond the point at which the natural appetite cries, *Enough*. It renders the cheerful meal a rapid and almost brutal *feeding*. "Nowhere," says Dr. Combe, "does man hurry off to business so immediately as in the United States of America, and nowhere does he bolt his food so much, as if running a race against time. The consequence is, that nowhere do intemperate eating and dyspepsia prevail to the same enormous amount." Even the philosophy of epicurism might teach us, that we altogether miss the exquisite savour of morsels which are swallowed in such inordinate haste.

When the mechanic comes in to his meals, he should regard the hour as devoted, not merely to being *fed*, but to gentle repose after labour, social relaxation, and deliberate intercourse with his family. How different the scene, when a gang of men and boys, at the sound of bell or horn, rush into the eating-room; seize upon the nearest

dishes with ravenous violence; hurry through their intemperate repast with the silence and ferocity of beasts; while each, as soon as he has stayed the rage of hunger, dashes out of the apartment, unrefreshed and overloaded.

To the mechanic's wife belongs the task of spreading the frugal meal in cleanliness and order. Much of the comfort of home depends on these minor arrangements; nay much of the husband's attachment to his own fireside has this source. The white and well-laid cloth, the bright knives and other implements, the scrupulous neatness of every dish, and the delicate grace of tidy arrangement, when coupled with smiles and good humour, can give a charm even to "a dinner of herbs." But as I look into the dining-rooms of my neighbours, I sometimes see another sight; the table thrust against the wall; the cloth rent, and stained, and scanty, and ill-spread; the knives mottled with rust; the dishes huddled together; and all that is to be eaten heaped up at one view. To the mechanic's wife, I would say, "Pray you avoid it."

XXII.

THE MECHANIC'S MUSICAL RECREATIONS.

IT can scarcely be denied that we are not a musical nation. We have no popular ballads; and what we call our National air is a burlesque, and always sung to ludicrous words. Listen to the snatches of songs which resound in the streets, and you will find them to be, in nine cases out of ten, not traditional lays, rich in ancient associations, but fragments of the last play-house airs, and for the most part senseless buffooneries, such as "Billy Barlow," "Jim Crow," or "Settin' on a Rail."

Yet I do not despair, having strong faith in the possibility of reforming even National tastes. There is a *taste* for music in our people; and here we have a foundation for our structure. In half our shops there is some musical instrument; and even though nothing but horrid discord is extracted from the ill-tuned fiddle or cracked flute, the very attempt shows the existence of a natural desire for the pleasures of melody. If our me-

chanics would only go about the work in the right way, they might soon arrive at exquisite enjoyment. Two errors are to be avoided ; first, the supposition that music is a luxury beyond the reach of busy men ; secondly, that proficiency may be attained without any instruction. There is so much musical capacity in our population, that in every village there might be, within a twelvemonth, a respectable band or orchestra. Where the experiment has been tried, this has been abundantly evinced. Several of the best bands in our cities are at this very moment composed of young working-men. But then let it be carefully observed, that musical skill does not come by inspiration. It is the fruit of labour, and of labour directed by some competent instructor. There lives very near to my abode a young apprentice, who has for about a year been playing, or rather working, on a violin. The youth is clever enough to learn, and his instrument is decent ; but I am persuaded that, in the way which he now pursues, he may perform for ten years without ever being able to execute a tune. His instrument is never intune, and as he systematically scrapes upon two discordant strings at the same time, the constant effect is not unlike the filing of a saw. He has begun at the wrong end ;

for I am persuaded that in two weeks I could put him in the way of becoming a very tolerable performer. In this, as in other things, some preliminary instruction is necessary; and in music, more than in most pursuits, the first blow is half the battle. If five or six young men would appoint an hour, bring their instruments, and for a few months play together under an experienced leader, they would be enabled to proceed even to the intricacies of the art, and would secure to themselves a satisfaction, of which they can now scarcely form a conception.

In Germany, music is taught in the schools as an indispensable part of common education. The reading of musical notation is learned even in the snow-covered huts of Iceland. In traversing the continent of Europe, the traveller finds at most of the hotels, bands of musicians from the neighbourhood, who play while he is at his meals. Every festival, whether national or religious, is graced with music. Serenades, from the same class of persons, are heard every night in the streets. Music echoes from shops and boats and harvest fields. Some of the best performances of Mozart's difficult pieces are said to proceed from the privates of Prussian regiments. It may be stated, as a general fact, that every house in Ger-

many and Switzerland has some musical instrument. In the vicinity of Geneva, a friend of the people succeeded in exciting such a zeal for national music, that I have known two thousand persons to be collected for the mere purpose of practising patriotic songs. It is scarcely needful to speak of Italy, or of the gondoliers of Venice. The street-music of that country might compare with our best performances here. Dr. Burney, a fastidious judge, speaks of having heard masterly execution in the streets of Brescia, from a company of the inhabitants; and he names the instruments, which were two violins, a mandoline, a French horn, a trumpet, and a violoncello.

I once stopped at a German settlement of no great size, where I was invited to hear some music at the house of a mechanic. Here a small company performed, vocally and instrumentally, almost the whole of Haydn's Creation. The master of the house, a blacksmith, more than sixty years old, took the first violin. His aged wife, in spectacles, gave us a vocal part. The eldest son, a joiner from a neighbouring village, sat down at a Leipsick piano-forte, on which, after having tuned it, he then executed with great skill the whole accompaniment. Several young men and women filled the remainder of the score.

A boy, five years of age, was pointed out to me, as beginning to play on the violin. Upon inquiry, I found that there was not a house in the town without a piano-forte, or some keyed instrument. The recollection of this evening's entertainment has often occurred to me as illustrating the happy influence of music upon domestic life and social habits. If you would have your young people to love home, induce them to cultivate music. It will beguile many a winter night, which might otherwise be spent in far different and more questionable pursuits.

I would seriously recommend to such young working-men as have any fondness for music, to look a little into the state of this matter among our more respectable German emigrants, or in the Moravian settlements in Pennsylvania. That which, among us, is a luxury imperfectly enjoyed by the rich, is among them the free inheritance of the yeomanry. There are few pleasures cheaper, more innocent, or nearer home. The best instrumental music in our great towns is produced by the aid of foreigners. I have scarcely ever listened to more entrancing harmony than that afforded, not long since, in our village, by a strolling band of eight very common-looking Germans. A few years ago a party of emigrants

encamped for the night upon an eminence about half a mile from my residence. About dusk, we were surprised by the most delightful sounds wafted across the valley from these humble sojourners. It appeared to be their evening hymn, accompanied by horns. The effect was indescribable.

The drift of all these remarks is to induce mechanics to cultivate music. I would, however, go a step further, and say, that the subject is one of so much importance in a national and moral point of view, that public-spirited men should attempt some concerted action for the encouragement of latent genius among the people. In Paris there was instituted, several years ago, a company of instrumental performers, wholly from men in mechanical employments, numbering more than a thousand. When I last heard of them, prizes were about to be distributed to the greatest proficient. Without aiming at any thing gigantic or chimerical, we may still do something in furtherance of this object. For example, in our own town and village, we may take pains to gather the scattered talent already existing, thus forming an association of such as have some measure of skill. These persons may be placed under the direction of the most advanced

musician among them, and may have stated meetings for practice. I have seen wonders wrought in this way. It is scarcely to be believed, before trial, how rapid is the progress of a company, as compared with that of a solitary player. And there is so great a charm in orchestral music, even though the performers do not exceed ten or a dozen, that little more will ever be needed than a beginning. Further, something may be done to reduce the price of instruction in instrumental music. So long as it comes to us with the tax of a luxury, it cannot diffuse itself. This end would soon be gained, if we should open the door to some of our worthy German musicians. A class of fifteen or twenty, at a low rate, might support some honest foreigner who is now starving. But the greatest reform is needed in private families. Parents and employers might accomplish the work, if they chose. But the truth is, they set no proper value on music, either as a pleasure, or a moral instrument. Their boy may whistle, or sing, or drum, or twang the jew's-harp, if he choose; but it no more enters their heads that music is a thing demanding any countenance or supervision, than that they should regulate the matter of hoop and ball. I am very sure that if I could duly represent to the apprentice who

reads these lines, how much refined and constantly increasing satisfaction he might derive, without any expense, from the cultivation of this art, he would not rest until he had advised with a teacher, bought an instrument, and deliberately entered his name as a musical scholar.

XXIII.

THE MECHANIC'S CLUBS.

IN a free country, the tendency to association for mutual benefit is very strong. Hence the great number of societies, clubs, unions, and other fraternities, for intellectual improvement, for political discussion, for defence, or for relief in sickness. The fascination of such alliances is so great, that young mechanics are often drawn in, before they are aware, to connexions, measures, and expenses, at once unjustifiable and ruinous. In times of pressure, ignorance is sure to impute every calamity to the designs of malignant persons—sometimes the government, sometimes corporations, sometimes capitalists and employers. It is thus that the cholera, in various unenlightened countries, has been ascribed to the arts of enemies. Under embarrassments and want, the sufferers cling together, and combine in associations for mutual defence; and in some cases these combinations remain long after their original work has been done. We have become

too familiar with "trades' unions" and "strikes" to need any special explanations. These associations, in the long run, fail of their professed aim; partly by encouraging conviviality, and withdrawing great numbers of men from regular work; partly from the fact, that employers, being few in number, can act in better concert, and being possessed of some capital, can stand out in resistance longer than the other party. From a careful observation of the way in which this thing works, I am inclined to advise every young mechanic to hold himself aloof from all entangling alliances of the kind.

Not long since, I met with the wife of a mechanic whom I had formerly known. Observing her to be in great want and distress, I inquired into the causes; upon which she gave me, in substance, the following history.

"My husband (John Glenn) worked in * * *, at the hatting business, in the employ of a Mr. Jones. He gave such satisfaction, that Jones put him into a decent house which he owned, allowing him a number of years to pay for it, and thus securing the continuance of his services. This suited both parties, and we were very happy in our little dwelling, until the hard times came. At this time we had more than half paid for the

house, and had a nice garden with abundance of fruit. Mr. and Mrs. Jones were very kind, and I really felt as if we were fixed for life. John seemed to get along comfortably enough, though we certainly had to use great economy; but at length his acquaintances began to put other notions into his head. They were determined to have higher wages, and declared that John should unite with them in their Union. He was as desirous as any one for higher wages, but then he had been well treated by his employer, and was in his debt, and therefore felt that it was against his real interest to join with them. He held out a long time, and was one of nine or ten who continued at the manufactory after all the others had struck for higher wages. But they ridiculed and even persecuted him. There was scarcely any shameful name which they did not call him. They used to come in by dozens, and laugh at him, saying that he was a coward, a sneak, and a deserter, Mr. Jones's *man Friday*, and his 'last apprentice.' In fact, they goaded him so much, that at last he threw up the game, and united in their combination. I was always against this; but, in such matters, a woman's advice goes for very little. Often, I assure you, I have shed tears to see him parading through the streets with

their procession and flags, or paying money to their union, when I knew that we had not a whole loaf for our dear little children. And then he used to come home at nights from their meetings, not exactly drunk, but in a state of excitement which was very new to him.

“Matters grew worse and worse, and we were brought nearer to absolute beggary than I had ever been in my life. After a while we began to see that we had been too hasty in condemning our employers; for we observed that they were as little able to help themselves as we had been ourselves. Mr. Jones was obliged to shut up his large factory; and, as for us, we were on the brink of starvation. Our hearts were too full for much talk; and we spent many a sad day without saying a word to one another about our affairs. At length John declared that this could last no longer, but that he must look for work somewhere else. We sold part of our little furniture, and went to Philadelphia. Here we had so little encouragement, and lived so poorly, that one of our children died, and John was taken down with a fever, which lasted nine weeks. When he recovered, he told me that all hope of getting a support in this part of the world was at an end. He is now on his way to Cincinnati, to

seek employment, and I am returning with our two remaining children to * * *, to see whether I can keep them alive among our former friends by taking in washing."

I am persuaded that this is the unvarnished history of many a mechanic's family, during the last year; and, also, that in many cases the evil has been greatly aggravated by rash connexion with clubs and combinations. The temptation to drink, to which this good woman alluded, is very common in most of these associations. When men without employment, and under strong passion, meet together in large numbers, they seldom fail to indulge in the use of liquor; and here it is that some lay the foundation of intemperate habits for life. Idleness, the parent of all vice, is inseparable from such connexions; and the whole system tends directly to produce irregularity of life and sullen discontent.

There are clubs and societies of other kinds, which might be mentioned as pertaining to the life of mechanics. Debating societies are popular in some parts of the country. They have a charm for young men of active minds, because they cultivate the social feelings, yield a sort of intellectual pleasure, and give opportunity for the excitements of public speaking. Such clubs

might be turned to good account; but in practice they are often found to be deleterious. As they frequently meet at taverns, the transition is too easy from the debate to the bar. The subjects discussed are apt to be those of party politics; and these are treated in most instances with asperity and heat. The leading members of these societies, not content with exercising the rights of freemen, are prone to fall into the current of factious turbulence, to the neglect of their proper business. You will seldom find a noted politician among working men who is not unthrifty in his trade.

It is pleasing to observe, however, that there is still another description of club or society, of which the influence is purely beneficial. I refer to those associations which have for their object the mental improvement of their members in knowledge and morals. There are many such connected with the town and village Lyceums of our country. Where these are conducted in an orderly way, and especially where they are connected with lectures, experiments, libraries, and reading-rooms, they cannot be too strongly recommended. It is to be wished that every young mechanic should be a member of some such institution. Their influence upon friendly

feeling is very benign. They afford a delightful recreation after the labour and tedium of the day. They draw their members away from the temptations of the tavern, the dance, and the circus; and they enrich the mind with the best of all worldly wealth, true knowledge. Yet even here I would be jealous of every thing which encroaches on the sanctity of the domestic circle, or breaks the flow of neighbourly fellowship. These associations become evil so soon as they keep any man perpetually away from his wife and children, or preclude the kindly interchange of visits between friend and friend. On this topic I must be allowed to repeat what I have said elsewhere, that the tendency of the age is adverse to the genial glow of old-fashioned social intercourse. In former days, neighbours spent a large part of their evenings in mingling with one another, and these pleasant, homely visits, cemented alliances which endured as long as life, and friendships which descended from father to son. There were lovely winter-evenings, "when this auld cap was new." But now, the chief assemblages of our young men are in the club, the bar-room, or the streets. If no other evil resulted, the necessary consequence is, that during all the time thus spent, they are debarred from

the humanizing influence of woman. I am ready to maintain that a society without female communion tends to barbarism. In a word, let us so regulate our associations that they may not invade the sacred intercourse of domestic and social life.

XXIV

THE MECHANIC ABOVE HIS BUSINESS.

“I HAVE often heard,” said UNCLE BENJAMIN “that puss in gloves catches no mice. And this has been very much in my mind lately, when I have observed how great is the ambition of our young sparks to be thought gentlemen.”

“Surely, father,” said Sammy, “you have no objection to a man’s dressing himself decently?”

“Not at all, Sammy; a man may be as decent, tidy, and even elegant as you please; but all in its proper place. I often hear people asking why Sunderland, which is one of our oldest villages, thrives so little; and I always answer, because the master-workmen are never in their shirt-sleeves. You may see them at their shop-doors in Sunday trim before they have got their third apprentice.”

“Then, father, you would have a man always in his apron.”

“Not at all, Sammy, I say again. When I was a lad, we made ourselves smart every evening; on Saturday nights we took a little foretaste

of Sunday; and when Sunday came, every man was rigged out in his best; and a very pretty sight it was, I assure ye, to see an old-time beau—his hair in powder, prettily clubbed—plated stock-buckle—ditto for knees and shoes—small-clothes and white stockings—and posy in the bosom.

“But then we earned it fairly by hard knocks. In working-hours there was no play; and no man was ashamed of labour. But now-a-days there is a great rage for being over-genteel. I often spy a rich waistcoat and gold chain under a butcher’s frock, and see young mechanics twiddling their ratans in the street, when they ought to have their coats off.”

“But you will allow that a man may do a good stroke of work with a clean shirt and decent vest?”

“Very good! perhaps he may in some sorts of business. Let every man be as neat as his work will allow; but a collier will have a black face, and he is a poor carpenter who makes no chips. But I am thinking of more than mere dress. Too many of our working-men are ashamed of that which is their honour, namely, their trade. When they appear in Broadway, they wear gloves, and ape the coxcombs who never do any thing.”

“Father, father,” said Sammy, “I am afraid

you would have mechanics reduced to an inferior caste, who must never rise, but forever look up to the richer folks as the lords of creation."

"There you mistake me greatly, Sammy. I am an old mechanic. Many a long year have I wrought at a laborious employment. I am for giving every man a chance to rise. I honour an industrious working-man. I think nothing more honourable than honest labour; and *because* I think so, I don't like to see a man ashamed of it. Let me tell you a story.

"About a year ago, I was returning in the stagecoach from Philadelphia, where I had been to see your uncle Isaac. Next to me sat a young man, who did not recognise me, but whom I at once knew to be a shoemaker in Second street. He took his seat with an air, and looked the gentleman. Every thing was fine; kid gloves; spectacles; watch in a little pocket almost under his arm; underclothes with a perpendicular aperture; white sole-straps; gold-headed switch. I perceived that his plan was to 'sink the shop.' Poor fellow! I wished to teach him a lesson, because I had known his father; so I gave him line for a while, and sat mum, while he talked largely of what the Philadelphians consider the property of each and every citizen—Fair Mount—Laurel Hill—Girard College—the new gas-lights—the

big ship. Not a word about trade, but much of 'Councils,' election, politics, the Great Western, and the theatre. As the company was very complaisant, he grew more easy, and at length usurped most of the conversation. At a good pause, I ventured to put in my oar, and asked, 'Can you tell me, sir, how Spanish hides have been selling?' He looked at me hard, and said, 'Not exactly, sir;' and hastened to talk of something else. 'Pray,' said I, 'do you know whether this business of importing Paris shoes has turned out well for the ——'s in Walnut street?' He coloured a little, pulled up the angles of his collar, and said, 'Not being in that line, sir, you must excuse me for not knowing.' He was uneasy, but not quite convinced that he was found out, and went on talking quite largely about the shipping business. I thought I could come a little nearer home by another inquiry, so I said gaily, 'Allow me to ask you whether good old Mr. Smack sticks to the last? I remember the day when he could finish his pair of boots with any man in Jersey.' This was wormwood; for he knew in his heart that Mr. Smack was his own father; yet as he was not even yet quite sure that I was apprized of the connexion, he replied with some confidence, though with a red face, 'Mr. Smack?—ah—yes—the old man; he has no'

been in active business for several years.' I should perhaps have been content with going thus far, had not young Mr. Smack launched out in a strain, more affected than ever, of very absurd discourse about playhouse matters. As it was, inasmuch as I never was ashamed of being a mechanic myself, I knew no reason why he should be; so at the earliest rest in the conversation, I said, 'Mr. Smack, I am pleased to see that you keep up the old business: a very pretty stand that of yours in Second street; and if you please customers as well as your good old father did, I can engage for your success.' This speech settled my man. He turned several colours; the passengers exchanged looks and smiled; and at the next watering-place Mr. Smack went outside and made the rest of the journey on the box."

"I can't help thinking," said Sammy, "that this was a little illnatured in you, father. The thing is this. We live in a land of liberty and equality: we are looked down upon as labourers, and twitted as mechanics, 'snobs,' and so on. It is very natural, therefore, that a man should try to escape these sneers, and put the best foot foremost."

"But hold, Sammy; I agree it is natural and right to escape from contempt; but take the right way to effect it. What is the right way? Cer-

tainly not by being above one's business, or trying to 'sink the shop.' For this is saying that you are yourself ashamed of your calling; whereas you ought to be proud of it. Why conceal a thing, unless you think it a disgrace? Can you expect other men to respect that which you despise yourself? There is no surer way of bringing honest industry into contempt, than by using low shifts to avoid the appearance of labour. If you wish the public to respect your vocation, show that you respect it yourself."

Such was the advice of this veteran mechanic to his son; and I verily believe there is sound wisdom in it. It is very common to find the very same persons complaining that they are looked down upon, who encourage the contempt by seeming ashamed of that which is their honour. After some years of careful observation, I have never seen a mechanic above his business, who did not meet with mortification where he sought respect; and I have never seen a working-man, however humble his sphere, who lost any consideration in society by frankly appearing in his real character, and laying his own hand to the task whenever it became needful. The working-men of America constitute a powerful and increasing class, and should do nothing to betray a doubt as to their own respectability.

XXV.

THE MECHANIC IN SICKNESS.

THERE are, at any given moment, more scenes of heart-touching grief among the humbler classes of society, than are ever dreamed of by the gay and opulent. It is one thing to sigh over the pictured sorrows of a romance, and another thing to enter among the realities of human suffering. In the latter case, we have to do with the naked, and often loathsome evil, without deduction, and without qualifying refinements.

Not long since, my business led me to visit the family of a young mechanic a few yards from my own lodgings. He was a journeyman printer, who had known fairer days : as had also his wife, a very young woman of little more than twenty years. This couple, with two infants, occupied a confined room in a third story. Some of my readers know that such is the habitation of many a larger household ; and when favoured with employment and health, there may be true comfort even in such a spot. But the case was here far different. At my first entrance, I felt

that I was inhaling the noxious air of a sick room. The apartment was kept much too warm by an unmanageable old stove, upon which were simmering, in one or two earthen mugs, various simples, imagined to be suitable to the patient. The fumes of these, and the atmosphere of a chamber which could never be duly ventilated, made the place oppressive in the extreme. In one corner, upon a sorry bed, lay poor JAMESON, haggard and wan, and plainly labouring under a violent pulmonary affection. The hectic spot upon the cheek, and the painful respiration, too clearly showed the nature of the malady. The hand which he languidly extended, on my entrance, was husky and hot, and I could feel the throb of the angry arteries, even without touching the wrist. His eye was lighted up with that peculiar glow which accompanies such visitations.

Near the bed, the pale and sorrowful wife, while she held her husband's hand, seemed at the same time to be making fruitless attempts so to arrange the tattered clothes as to conceal the meagerness of the covering. A puny child was hiding its face in her lap, and another was asleep upon the floor. But few words were needed to let me into the extent of their disasters. During the earlier summer they had enjoyed health, and

found ample employment. But the decline of business threw Jameson out of work; and as he had never earned enough to justify any savings, the end of the season found him almost penniless. Just at this juncture, an unavoidable exposure occasioned a cough, which settled on his lungs, and left him in the state I have described. At first they called in a physician, but finding that this was an expense beyond their means, and that his prescriptions were of little avail, they had abandoned this reliance. They were without friends, or a single acquaintance except the inmates of the house, who treated them with vulgar indifference.

When I proceeded to inquire more closely into their circumstances, the poor woman burst into lamentation, and begged me not to press the subject, lest the excitement should be too much for her husband; while I could perceive the eyes of the sick man himself filling with scalding tears. Indeed, it would be hard to imagine a wretchedness more abject. At that very moment they were without a mouthful of food. For the sick man it was not needed; and the heroic self-devotion of the wife seemed to raise her above the ordinary cravings of nature; but she admitted that her heart was breaking with the cries of her little ones for bread.

As I pursued my solitary way homeward, saddened by what I had beheld, my gloom was increased by the reflection, that even then, and in that single town, there were doubtless many repetitions of the same scene; and that the number of these must necessarily be increased upon the access of a severe winter. If, therefore, I could write a line which might serve to prevent or alleviate such burdens, I thought the effort would not be undesirable. Among working-men, who "live from hand to mouth," sickness is a sore calamity; and on an examination of statistical tables, I find that on an extended computation, the average number of sick days in a working-man's year is far greater than I had imagined. The late pressure and present embarrassments in commerce cannot fail to make themselves felt, by their operation on the mind. "Of the causes of disease," says a judicious English physician, "anxiety of mind is one of the most frequent and important. When we walk the streets of large commercial towns, we can scarcely fail to remark the hurried gait and care-worn features of the well-dressed passengers. We live in a state of unnatural excitement; unnatural, because it is partial, irregular, and excessive. Our muscles waste for *want* of action; our nervous system is worn out by *excess* of action." We may add, that in

many trades there is an excess in both sorts of action, and the body is worn away by labour while the mind is exhausted by despondency. If, then, disease is so sore a calamity to the working-man, it were greatly to be desired that every such person should be in some measure familiar with the laws of his animal constitution, and by all possible means should guard against the decay of his animal powers. But, inasmuch as sickness is unavoidable, with even the wisest precautions, there are one or two considerations which every mechanic should ponder, with reference to what has been hinted above.

First, *Frugality and economy should be used in time of health, in order to lay up something for time of sickness.* Disease is most oppressive when it is conjoined with poverty. Though a money-loving, we are at the same time an improvident, race. Many good and thrifty artisans lay up nothing. I know men now in abject want, who, a few months ago, were earning each his twenty dollars a week. What can such men do to resist the sudden tide of disease?

Secondly, *Working-men should avail themselves of associations for mutual relief in case of sickness.* Beneficent societies of this nature are common, but hale and well-doing persons are in many instances neglectful of this resource until

it is too late. The manner in which these institutions are conducted is frequently most injudicious. The rates both of subscription and of disbursement are often unwise, and contrary to all sound principles of life-insurance and probability. The consequence is, that in bad times the fund is exhausted. Before any such scheme is ratified, it should be carefully examined by persons versed in the intricate calculations of annuities. And when the plan goes into effect, there should be great care taken to guard against wanton expenditure upon entertainments, processions, and other unnecessary wastes. I would commend this subject to the careful discrimination of all those who are interested in the well-being of the labouring classes.

Thirdly, *Private benevolence should busy itself in seeking out and relieving all such cases of distress.* Let the mechanic feel that his interest is identified with that of all his brethren. Let him be quick to descry, and alert to mitigate the sorrows of his own townsmen and neighbours. No associated action can reach every case; but private charity, inspired by the genius of the gospel, may extend its kindly arm to the humblest sufferer. It is one of the most striking particulars in the account of the last judgment, as given by our Saviour, that the great final doom is to be awarded

with a direct reference to duties of this very class. That which is done for Christ's poor brethren is done for Christ; and if we neglect them, we neglect our own salvation. For the King shall say to those who have been guilty of this omission, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not."

XXVI.

THE MECHANIC'S WINTER EVENINGS.

THE dreariest of all the seasons is not without its charms. If we have no verdure, nor flowers, nor zephyrs, we have the bright fireside and the family circle. Some of our most valuable attainments may be made, and some of our purest pleasures enjoyed, during the long winter evenings. It is, however, unfortunately the case with too many, that these fine opportunities are thrown away.

The other evening, after my usual light meal, the thought struck me, that I would give something to know how some half dozen of my acquaintances were spending their hours of release. Now, as I have no familiar Asmodeus to unroof for me my neighbours' houses and disclose their contents, I was reduced to the necessity of seizing my good oaken stick, and sallying forth upon a rapid tour of espionage.

At the very first corner, I perceived through the window my old comrade Stith, employed, as usual, with his pipe. After a day spent at the lathe,

he thinks himself entitled to this luxury ; and with his dog at his feet, and his tobacco-box at his elbow, he sacrifices long hours of every night to the subduing influence of a narcotic. As I should only disturb his reverie, thought I, I will pass on.

Boulangier, the French baker, was the next in order. When I knocked, there was no reply. At length a drowsy boy let me in, and, as I expected, there was the corpulent master of the house fast asleep in an arm-chair. It is surprising how "practice makes perfect" in the art of slumbering. There may be some excuse for the baker, who has to rise several hours before day ; but the practice is by no means confined to him ; and I know more than one working-man who prepares for the regular night's work of the bed, by a sort of prelibation in the chimney-corner. This case offered nothing to detain me.

My next call was at the Golden Swan, one of the numerous taverns of our village. The bar-room was highly illuminated with many lamps, and two bright coal fires : the atmosphere was almost palpable, so thick was the smoke ; and the air was redolent of alcoholic mixtures. Here I found, as I never fail to find at this hour, four or five of our mechanics ; some smoking, some chewing, some drinking ; and all engaged with loud voices in discussing the affairs of the state

and nation. Of such men the tavern is the home. True, each of them has a residence, inhabited by his wife, and known by the assessor; and where indeed he eats and sleeps: but that is not his home. His heart is not there, but at the bar-room, whither he goes with the momentum of an unbent spring, whenever labour is over; in which he spends the long evening of every day; and from which he reels to his family, at a late hour, to chide his wife for being up so late, and for looking so melancholy.

I gladly passed on to the dwelling of Quince, the shoemaker. Alas! the scene was altered, but not improved. The spirit of intoxication leads some men to ruin in groups, others in solitude. Quince is not a tavern-brawler, but a sot. During the day he never drinks; during the evening he does little else. There are many that have a fair reputation in the world, who never go to bed sober. I am willing to drop a veil over the particulars which I witnessed.

The scene brightened when I reached the steps of John Hall, the cabinet-maker; for I found his front room illuminated, and occupied by a little religious meeting. But I proceeded, and stepped into the house of Dukes, my next acquaintance, and was near spending the whole hour there; for he and his wife and children were engaged in a

little musical concert, which was most enviable. Mary Dukes sung over her knitting, and Robert sung over his base-viol ; while the two boys, one with a flute and the other with a violin, added a good accompaniment. As I hurried away, I perceived the silversmith, who hires their front room for a shop, busily employed in posting his books.

Having travelled thus far on one side of the street, I thought it no more than fair to return on the other ; so I crossed over, and knocked at the door of Belden, the coppersmith. The house is one of the tidiest in our town, at whatever hour you may drop in ; and this must be set to the credit of the notable partner. Truly the sight was a pleasant one which met my eyes as I was ushered into their best room ; being nothing less than a genuine old-fashioned tea-drinking with some dozen of pleasant neighbours, all in their best dress and best humours, around a well-laden table and a smoking urn. When I compared the healthy glow of their countenances with the excited glare of the tavern-haunters, I could not hesitate whose evening to prefer. But I denied myself, and went on. I hesitated a moment about intruding upon my friend George Riley, wheelwright, because I remembered how lately he had lost his wife ; but long intimacy em-

boldened me, and I went in. George was sitting by the fire, with an infant on his knee, and two little girls seated by his side. He was talking with them in a low tone of voice, and a tear was twinkling in his eye as he rose to accost me. No doubt he was giving them some useful instruction, for a Bible was lying open on the stand, and George is a man of religious feelings.

Last of all, I chose to enter the little back-room of Henderson, the Scotch weaver, nothing doubting as to what I should find. As I expected, Colin was at his books. A large map was spread out upon the table, and on this he was tracing the triumphant progress of Napoleon, whose life he was engaged in reading. Henderson is a man of slender means, but he finds himself able to lay out a few dollars every year upon good books; and the number of these has increased so much, that he has lately fitted up a neat little bookcase in one corner of his room. He has also a pair of globes, and an electrical machine, and has made himself quite familiar with natural philosophy and chemistry. Almost all his evenings are spent in reading, or in making philosophical experiments; and I am persuaded that none of his neighbours enjoy more comfort than he. After a few minutes' conversation with him, I came home, musing upon the blindness of the

multitude, who cannot perceive the profit and pleasure of knowledge. But I defer my reflections on this subject for another paper, as I have much more to say than can be comprehended in a single communication.

XXVII.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Importance of Education to the American Mechanic

I AM ready to believe that the day is past, in which any one could find the title of this paper strange or ludicrous. If there is any reader who is disposed to take such a view of the subject, I must set him down as an emigrant from some despotic state, or a native of some wild frontier. There are regions, and there have been periods of time, in which mechanics have been held at so low a rate, as to be ranked but one degree above beasts of burden; to whom we might look for valuable service, but who needed no illumination. A better doctrine prevails in America. Wherever God has made a soul, we maintain that he has furnished a receptacle for knowledge. Some men must indeed require more knowledge than others, just as some men acquire more wealth than others; but man is an intelligent, or, in other words, a knowing creature; and we wish the stream of knowledge to be conducted to every individual of our nation.

The working-man is not expected to become an erudite scholar, or profound philosopher; this is the lot of such only as make the pursuit of knowledge their great business for life. But there is no man who may not acquire information enough on every subject, to be highly useful and agreeable. I have already suggested, in the course of these papers, that knowledge is peculiarly important to mechanics in America. In our free and growing country there is no barrier to indefinite advancement. Among the Hindoos, the son of a carpenter must be a carpenter; and the son of a blacksmith, a blacksmith. In the despotic states of Europe, the hedge of caste is not quite so high; yet such is the state of society, that, in the long run, the labourer's son is always a labourer; and though many sink below, few rise above the level of their origin. How different is the case among us! Every reader of these lines will think of persons who were once poor working-men, but who are now not merely rich, but distinguished in political and civil life. We at once call to mind the names of Benjamin Franklin, David Rittenhouse, Nathaniel Greene, Roger Sherman, and Thomas Ewing. Here then is a strong reason why the working-man should have education. Perhaps he will not always be a working-man; nay, it is his aim and expectation

to be something more. Now, if this wish be gratified, he will find himself in a new circle, amidst new companions, and where new qualifications for respectability will be demanded. Among men of information and refinement of mind, he will need something of the same, in order to take an equal rank. There are few objects more laughable than a vulgar and ignorant man of wealth. Every young mechanic should resolve to gain as great a store of information as is possible, in order to be ready for these changes which may take place in his circumstances.

But there is another peculiarity of American society, which renders some learning indispensable to the mechanic. Not only may he cease to be a working-man, but, even *remaining such*, he may be admitted to the intimacy of the accomplished and the elegant. Amidst these last I am bold to enrol some friends among the labouring classes—enough, certainly, to show that the two things are by no means incompatible. Now, educated and refined persons do not enjoy the company of those who are just the reverse. If you desire to mingle with persons of this character, you must seek to have some of their excellencies : and having these, there will be no obstacle to your admission. In Europe it is not so ; there the demarcation between ranks is strongly drawn. In

America, though demagogues are fond of crying *Aristocracy!* there is no aristocracy in the European sense of that word. Here, it is true, as all over the world, like seeks its like—the rich man consorts with the rich man—the poor with the poor—the mechanic with the mechanic. But let it be remembered, that in America the educated man also seeks the intimacy of the educated man ; and this whether he be rich or poor. Few ties of association are stronger than the common pursuit of knowledge. If you are possessed of science, or even seeking it, you have a passport to the study of the scholar. My word for it, that this experiment will not fail. Let the humblest labourer, possessed of some philosophical acquisition, go to Bowditch, Silliman, Henry, Cleveland, Bache, or Emmet, with a view to confer on a topic of common interest, and I will engage that no one of these learned men will ask whether he is rich or poor—a professor or a pedler.

Take it into consideration, likewise, that posts of honour and responsibility are open to all classes of men in the commonwealth. No poor mother, who looks on her sleeping babe, can predict with certainty that this very child may not one day be President of the United States. Leaving this extreme supposition, however, let it be noticed, that a large proportion of our public functionaries,

especially in the new states, are men who have laboured with their hands. How did it happen that these, rather than many others, obtained such prizes? Was it by mere chance? Certainly not; but by the deliberate choice of their fellow-citizens. Were they then the only men of talents in all that class of society? By no means: there are thousands still at the last and the loom, whose native powers are equal to theirs. What then is the secret of their advancement? I will tell you: *They had a thirst for knowledge.* They pursued and attained it. Knowledge is power: they thus gained power over their fellow men, exactly in proportion to their mental attainments. Here is a motive to exertion, which might well move every young man of spirit to attempt the improvement of his mind.

All these reasons, notwithstanding their truth and importance, should still have less cogency than the conviction of duty, which must arise whenever we consider ourselves as rational and immortal creatures. God has not given us these minds to be unemployed. Our usefulness in life depends very much on the exercise which we give to our faculties.

In several subsequent papers, I propose to offer a few suggestions, intended to stimulate working men to more earnest intellectual endeavours; to

point out the advantages and pleasures of such pursuits ; to give some hints of what matters it is desirable to know ; to indicate the ways and means of acquiring knowledge ; and to encourage even the busy mechanic in the hope that by redeeming time he may arrive at invaluable attainments.

Let me ask the attention of the industrious classes to these counsels of a friend.

XXVIII.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

The Pleasures of Knowledge.

No man ever needed any arguments to increase his desire for the pleasures of sense. Yet these pleasures are in their nature evanescent; soon palling upon the jaded appetite; and, when pursued beyond certain very narrow limits, productive of great pain. In their quality, also, they are acknowledged to be the lowest of our gratifications. It is far otherwise with the pleasures of the mind. These are high, and spiritual, and ennobling, and may be pursued without weariness and without satiety.

That there is a natural thirst in all men for knowledge, and that the gratification of this thirst conveys pleasure, are truths which are felt to be such as soon as stated. The infant's curiosity, and the inquisitiveness of the schoolboy, the search for strange or wonderful objects, and the universal passion for news, are all modifications of the same original propensity. If there is one boy in a shop, who has travelled more, or read

more than his fellows, he straightway becomes their oracle, and they extract from him all that he can communicate. Many readers of the newspapers are really hard students; but they have never yet entertained the important truths, that all serious reading is study; that the same propensities are gratified in perusing the news as in poring over the sciences; and that the process of acquiring knowledge is in both cases the same.

My desire is to impress on the mind of every young mechanic, that a little increase of learning will give him a great increase of happiness. *Knowledge is Power*, says Lord Bacon. *Knowledge is Pleasure*, we may add with equal truth. Perhaps you will grant this, but you have taken up the notion that this pleasure must be sought through a great deal of pain. No supposition can be more erroneous. The first steps towards these fruits are, indeed, over a rugged way. The trunk of the tree is of difficult ascent. The husk is rough. But these obstacles are little more than momentary, and, having once overcome them, you have nothing but a succession of enjoyments. Indeed, the pursuit of knowledge is so purely pleasurable, that I have often paused, and sat in amazement at the blindness and folly of those, who, with every opportunity and free invitation, never enter this garden. I may say

with Milton, to such as yield to my guidance, "We shall conduct you to a hill-side, laborious indeed at the first ascent; but else so smooth, so green, so full of goodly prospects and melodious sounds, that the harp of Orpheus was not more charming."

The pleasures of knowledge are distinct from its utility; and were there no profit in science, it might still be sought as the highest luxury. By reading and study you become acquainted with a great number of new and extraordinary truths. Hear Lord Brougham on this point: "How wonderful are the laws that regulate the motions of fluids! Is there any thing in all the idle books of tales and horrors, more truly astonishing than the fact, that a few pounds of water may, by mere pressure, without any machinery—by merely being placed in a particular way, produce an irresistible force? That the diamond should be made of the same material as coal; that water should be chiefly composed of an inflammable substance; that acids should be, for the most part, formed of different kinds of air; that one of these acids, whose strength can dissolve almost any of the metals, should consist of the selfsame ingredients with the common air we breathe; that salts should be of a metallic nature, and composed in great part of metals, fluid like

quicksilver, but lighter than water, and which, without heating, take fire upon being exposed to the air, and, by burning, form the substance so abounding in saltpetre and in the ashes of burnt wood: these, surely, are things to excite the wonder of any reflecting mind—nay, of any one but little accustomed to reflect. And yet these are trifling when compared to the prodigies which astronomy opens to our view: the enormous masses of the heavenly bodies; their immense distances, their countless numbers, and their motions, whose swiftness mocks the utmost efforts of the imagination.” To this we may add the pleasure of discerning new relations between truths already known; of advancing in the track of discovery; and of conducting trains of reasoning to undeniable conclusions. For lighter hours, the records of past ages open a path of entertainment far more healthful, and far more enduring than the pages of the romance. Truth is more wonderful, more fascinating than fiction. I have recently been reading a detailed account of the French Revolution, by a very eminent statesman of France: and I can truly say, that although I have been a great devourer of novels in my day, I have never had my curiosity, sympathy, dread, and indignation, wound up to so high a pitch of interest, as in the perusal of these

volumes. Why should the mechanic, more than other men, be willing to remain in ignorance of all that has been occurring for centuries upon our globe? His interests are those of common humanity. An ancient has said, "Not to know what happened before you were born, is to be always a child." Why should not the mechanic, as well as his wealthier neighbours, enjoy the high satisfaction of reading the story of past ages, and especially of his country's independence? If it be possible for a working-man to have these exquisite satisfactions, surely every one will say at once, Let him have them without delay. That it is possible, I mean to show in the papers which follow. One of the greatest privileges of a freeman is denied to him who remains in ignorance—for he might as well be a slave. The religious man, also, who suffers his mind to continue without cultivation, buries one of his most important talents. "The delight is inexpressible," says the noble author quoted above, "of being able to follow, as it were, with our eyes, the marvellous works of the Great Architect of Nature—to trace the unbounded power and exquisite skill which are exhibited in the most minute, as well as the mightiest parts of his system. The pleasure derived from this study is unceasing, and so various, that it never

tires the appetite. But it is unlike the low gratifications of sense in another respect: while those hurt the health, debase the understanding, and corrupt the feelings, this elevates and refines our nature, teaching us to look upon all earthly objects as insignificant and below our notice, except the pursuit of knowledge and the cultivation of virtue; and giving a dignity and importance to the enjoyment of life, which the frivolous and the grovelling cannot even comprehend."

XXIX.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

The Profit of Knowledge.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, said Lord Bacon, and the aphorism has become immortal ; but I think it has not been sufficiently considered that the same observation, in substance, was made many centuries earlier by Solomon, who says, *Wisdom is better than strength*. When I think of answering the question, "What are the uses of knowledge?" I am disheartened at the greatness of the subject. Volumes might be written in reply ; and I am almost tempted to cut the matter short, by saying, "All conceivable uses." All the good there is in the world is in a sense the product of knowledge. Compare the Hottentot with the Englishman, and own the power of education. Knowledge is the instrument in civilizing the world ; and in proportion to the knowledge of any individual is his exaltation above the savage state.

You are, let me suppose, an artisan ; you know that some information is useful to certain ends, but you are contented to seek those ends by an

easier and shorter method, independently of science. Allow me to tell you that you egregiously mistake. You cannot throw out the influence of knowledge any more than the influence of gravity. It is still knowledge which governs, though it may not be possessed by you. The only option which you have, is between being under the dominion of other people's knowledge, or taking part in the direction by your own. This makes a striking difference among mechanics. One man is a mere imitator. He turns out good work, but precisely as his old master did fifty years ago. He has no principles, exercises no reason, and makes no improvements. It is his pleasure to drive his wheel in the old rut. This is more like instinct than intellect; thus the bird builds its nest precisely as its ancestors have done ever since the creation. But a second workman has knowledge; he learns to investigate; he applies a little science to his work, and he becomes a discoverer. His methods are the fruit of reflection, and they save labour, time, materials, and money.

Let me illustrate this a little more fully. The story is familiar of the boy who always took his sacks to the mill with the corn in one end and a great stone to balance it in the other: his father and grandfather, forsooth, had done so before him.

Here we have a picture of the way in which ignorant men go on from age to age without advancement. It may be safely alleged that there is no handicraft, however plain or humble, to which some of the principles of science may not be applied with advantage. In the more glaring cases, every one grants this. Thus a clock-maker should know something about oscillating bodies ; a pump-maker something of hydraulics. Yet even in these instances many pursue their trades with a mere blind imitation, and are totally at fault when a new case occurs. The coachmaker, and even the wagoner, would gain by understanding a few principles about the proper line of draught, and the advantage or disadvantage of the several sorts of springs. A caster of metals was for months perplexed by finding that he could scarcely ever hit the precise weight of metal to be used in casting an article of irregular form ; at length a neighbouring schoolmaster taught him a simple law of hydrostatics, and then he had only first to immerse his model in a tub of water, and then to throw in metal until it reached the same height. Every one sees that some science is required for the *invention* of the Nott or the Olmsted stove ; but it is not so readily acknowledged that some science is required in order to *use* them with economy and advantage. The

roughening of surfaces which are to radiate heat is a dictate of philosophy which is often very important. Metallic coffee-pots sometimes burn the fingers : this is avoided by making the handle partly of a non-conductor ; but I have seen the bungling imitator copy this very article, with the ignorant substitution of the painted metal for painted wood ; thus defeating the object. Many a good miller spoils his mill by unphilosophical tampering ; as, for instance, by placing cogs on one of the rings of the water-wheel, or using a driving-wheel of equal diameter ; thus giving a check to the momentum.

Many valuable products of the earth are lost by the ignorance of their possessors. In some of our States, how long was it before the properties of marl were fully recognised ; and how many agriculturists are still incompetent to make a discriminating use of this mineral substance. Within thirty years, manganese was imported into England from Germany for the arts, while masses of it were ignorantly used for the repair of roads ; and it is not two centuries since the tanners of Cornwall threw away the ores of copper, as refuse, under the name of *poder*. “ To how many kinds of workmen must a knowledge of mechanical philosophy be useful ! To how many others does chemistry prove almost necessary !

Every one must perceive at a glance, that to engineers, watchmakers, instrument-makers, bleachers, and dyers, those sciences are most useful, if not necessary. But carpenters and masons are surely likely to do their work better for knowing how to measure, which practical mathematics teaches them, and how to estimate the strength of timber, of walls, and of arches, which they learn from practical mechanics; and they who work in various metals are certain to be more skilful in their trades for knowing the nature of these substances, and their relations to both heat and other metals, and to the airs and liquids they come in contact with. Nor is it enough to say, that philosophers may discover all that is wanted, and may invent practical methods, which it is sufficient for the working-man to learn by rote, without knowing the principles. He never will work so well if he is ignorant of the principles; and for a plain reason: if he only learns his lesson by rote, the least change of circumstances puts him out. Be the method ever so general, cases will always arise in which it must be varied in order to apply; and if the workman only knows the rule without knowing the reason, he must be at fault the moment he is required to make any new application of it.”*

* Library of Useful Knowledge, vol. i. Prelim. Treatise.

So much for that knowledge which comes into play in the prosecution of the several trades. But over and above this, there is no sort of information which may not, at one time or another, conduce to man's comfort or emolument. In this country we are all fond of being politicians, and proud of the right of discussion, and the elective franchise. The history of states and revolutions is, after all, the great treasury of political science, and every free citizen should have access to these stores.

In a word, if you desire to rise in society, and to influence others, labour for an increase of your knowledge. The method is infallible. Look around you, and find the man who excels all his fellows in useful information, and you will perceive in him one who governs the minds and the conduct of a large circle.

XXX.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Discouragements.

IN smoothing the way for the working-man towards the attainment of knowledge, I find that I have not many predecessors.* It is only in modern times that any such assistance has been systematically proffered. Among the works of the ancients, there are none which invite the labouring classes to share in the banquet of science; and even in later days, the popular essays of Johnson and Addison have been addressed to the wealthy and the gay. Within a few years past, the cause of popular education, in all free States, has begun to assume its just rank; and various publications have been made to stimulate the productive portion of nations to inquiry and culture. Still there are many objections to be met, and many discouragements to be blown away, before we can awaken to action even those

* There is, of course, an exception here in favour of one or two excellent compilations, which are recommended on another page.

who admit the excellency of education. I propose to evince to the intelligent mechanic, that the acquisition of learning is practicable; that there is no obstacle which may not be surmounted; and then, in succeeding papers, to show by undoubted facts, that every sort of difficulty has actually been overcome. Let me consider some of the objections which are likely to arise.

1. *The acquisition of learning is a great work, and I am appalled by its vastness.* True, the work is great, but not impossible. To attempt the whole circle of sciences would be vain; but to gain a part, and that a large part, is by no means out of the question. Dr. Johnson somewhere uses a happy illustration, of which I can only recollect the outline. Let a man sit down at the foot of a high mountain, to contemplate its greatness, and he will be ready to say, "The attempt is futile; I can never go over it." Yet, on second thought, he perceives that the work is to be achieved, not at one mighty leap, but by successive steps, and by the simple process of putting one foot before the other. The same great philosopher has said: "The chief art of learning, as Locke has observed, is to attempt but little at a time. The widest excursions of the mind are made by short flights frequently repeated: the most lofty fabrics of science are

formed by the accumulation of single propositions." Sands make the mountain, moments make the year. The rock is worn away, not by sudden force, but by perpetual droppings.

2. *I am poor, and cannot hope to become a scholar.* Blessed be God! no golden key is required in order to enter the garden of knowledge. Poverty offers hinderances, but only enough to induce more strenuous efforts. I mean to adduce examples of wonderful attainments made by men whose penury was greater than that of any one who reads these pages. Much may be learned from a few books, and much may be learned without any books at all. Some of the most brilliant discoveries in philosophy and chemistry have flowed from experiments, the whole apparatus for which did not cost a dollar. Let the poor man think of Heyne, Hutton, and Ferguson, of whom more hereafter. Wealth does not ensure learning. Indeed, opulence relaxes perhaps quite as much as want contracts the mind. One of the papers of the Rambler is entitled, "On the difficulty of educating a young nobleman." It is possible that if you were rich you would be far less disposed to acquire knowledge than you are at present.

3. *My occupation is laborious, and I have no time for study* Certainly you are unable to

command as much time as men of leisure ; but you overrate the difficulty. There is not one person in ten who does not spend some of his hours in idleness, if not in vice. Most hard-working men pass more of their time in actual labour than is good for either mind or body : nature is supported with moderate toil, and there should be a portion reserved for the refreshment and discipline of the understanding. Besides ; more may be learned by devoting a few moments daily to reading, than you would at first suppose. Five pages may be read in fifteen minutes ; at which rate one may peruse twenty-six volumes, of two hundred pages each, in a single year. By saving the broken fragments of time, and redeeming hours from sloth and sleep, it is almost incredible how much may be accomplished without interfering with the most industrious habits.

4. *I have no teacher or assistant.* A good instructor is of great use, and saves much unnecessary labour ; but even this is not indispensable. You will see from the examples which I shall give, how many have become learned in spite of this defect. Most educated persons, even among those who have enjoyed the best tuition, will tell you, that by far the most valuable part of their education is that which they have given themselves. Some of the greatest philosophers and

scholars whom the world has seen have been literally *self-taught men*. Only determine to acquire knowledge; use the best helps you have; and wherever you may begin, you will certainly end in great acquirements.

5. *My early education was neglected, and I am now too old to begin.* Let me call the attention of every youthful reader to this objection. How powerful an argument may be drawn from it in favour of beginning at once! But even to those who are somewhat advanced in life, I would say with the proverb, "Better late than never." Be encouraged: you have lost the highest prize, but there are others behind. It is true that the man who begins his journey after the sun is high, cannot overtake him who started at dawn, but by activity he may still do a great deal. You will have to work harder than others, but your gain will be just in proportion to your own efforts.

6. *My talents are only of the ordinary kind.* Be it so: you may still employ them so as to add immensely to your profit and happiness. It is an injurious error to suppose that the difficulties in the way of knowledge can be overcome only by extraordinary genius. Sir Henry Savile, provost of Eton, and one of the translators of our English Bible, used to say, "Give me the plodding student. If I would look for wits, I would

go to Newgate. There be the wits." That same good sound common-sense which conducts you through the details of your trade, will, if properly directed, lead you to the most desirable attainments in knowledge. Perhaps you may never become a Bacon, a Newton, or a Pascal, but you may obtain enough to double your usefulness and your comfort. Lay it down as a maxim, that no difficulty, arising from outward circumstances, can effectually resist a steady determination to excel.

XXXI.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Examples.

To say what *can* be done is less impressive than to say what *has* been done ; therefore I propose by a number of examples to show what the love of learning and persevering industry have accomplished, even in the persons of the humble.* I might begin with FRANKLIN ; but I take it for granted that every reader of these pages is familiar with his history. LINNAEUS is an instance less hackneyed. It is known that he became the greatest naturalist of his day, and the father of a system which bears his name. But it is not so generally known that Linnaeus, the founder of the science of botany, was once seated on the shoemaker's bench. JOHN HUNTER, one of the greatest anatomists of our own or any age, was a cabinet-maker's apprentice, and spent the first twenty

* It is no more than just to say here, once for all, that in a number of these instances the author has done little more than abridge the lives published by the " Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge."

years of his life without education. At this late period, he was led, by the failure of his master, to become an assistant in his brother's dissecting-room; and here his genius was awakened. The great dramatist, BEN JONSON, was a working bricklayer, and afterwards a soldier. The greatest of modern comic writers, MOLIERE, was fourteen years old before he was an adept in reading and writing. HANS SACHS, an early German poet of great fame, and a very learned scholar, was the son of a tailor, and served an apprenticeship, first to a shoemaker, and afterwards to a weaver; and continued to work at the loom as long as he lived. JOHN FOLCZ, another German poet, was a barber. JOHN CHRISTIAN THEDEN, who rose to be chief surgeon to the Prussian army, had been a tailor's apprentice. PAUCTON, an eminent French mathematician, was bred in such poverty, that he received scarcely any education until he reached his eighteenth year.

A very remarkable exemplification of successful enterprise occurs in the case of STEPHEN DUCK, a native of Wiltshire. He was born about 1700, of poor parents, and received a little school instruction. He then became a common labourer for some years, and forgot all that he had previously learned. At length he began to read a little, and found a thirst for knowledge excited.

He was now twenty-four years of age, with a wife and family, engaged at hard labour, and too poor to buy any books. Yet by extra jobs he earned enough to purchase one or two works on arithmetic and surveying. These he studied with great avidity, at night, while others were asleep. From a comrade he borrowed a few books, such as Milton, the Spectator, Seneca's Morals, an English Dictionary and Grammar, Ovid, Josephus, a few plays, Dryden's Virgil, Hudibras, and the poems of Waller and Prior. In process of time he became himself a poet, and attracted some attention, so that he received a pension from the queen. He applied himself to the learned languages, took holy orders, and lived in much respectability until the year 1756.

This instance, in common with most which I cite, shows that poverty is no effectual barrier to the pursuit of knowledge. The history of the great scholar ERASMUS is well known. While he was studying at Paris his necessities were very great, so that he was reduced to rags; yet such was his literary zeal, that he wrote to a friend: "As soon as I get money, I will first buy Greek books, and then clothes." Among the classical scholars of our day, there has been no one more distinguished than the German, HEYNE, a voluminous commentator on Homer and Virgil,

and an eminent professor; yet his origin was humble, and he had to struggle through great poverty. His father was a poor weaver, with a large family. "Want," says Heyne, "was the earliest companion of my childhood. I well remember the painful impressions made upon my mind by witnessing the distress of my mother, when without food for her children. How often have I seen her, on a Saturday evening, weeping and wringing her hands, as she returned home from an unsuccessful effort to sell the goods which the daily and nightly toil of my father had manufactured." After the usual course at a village school, the poor lad wished to learn Latin, and engaged to pay a schoolfellow fourpence a week for instructing him; but even this pittance would have been too much for him to raise, if it had not been for the kindness of a baker who was his godfather. From this time forward he battled with misfortune till he entered the university. Here his ardour for study was such, that for six months he allowed himself only two nights' sleep in the week. It is needless to trace his further course: what has been stated shows that poverty is no effectual obstacle.

The great HERSCHEL was a self-taught astronomer. He was the son of a poor musician, and at the age of fourteen was placed in a band of

music attached to the Hanoverian guards. After going to England he undertook instruction in music; then became an organist. But while he was supporting himself in this way, he was learning Italian, Latin, and even Greek. From music he was naturally led to mathematics, and thence to optics and astronomy. His name is now inscribed among the planetary orbs.

The inventor of the Achromatic Telescope is another instance in point. JOHN DOLLOND spent his early years at the silk-loom. But even in boyhood he evinced a taste for mathematics, and used to amuse himself with making sundials, and solving geometrical problems. Yet he continued in his original business even for some years after his eldest son came to an age to join him in it. During all this period, however, he was making silent advances in scientific reading. At the age of forty-six, he and his son devoted themselves to optics, and proceeded from step to step until his great discovery respecting light, which elevated him to the acme of his reputation.

How many manufacturers, who may cast their eyes on these lines, might find in the imitation of Dollond an ennobling as well as entertaining pursuit!

XXXII.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

More Examples.—Learned Shoemakers.

WHEN we have to wrestle with difficulties, it is cheering to know that others before us have met and overcome them. The working-man, who is earnestly endeavouring to obtain learning, will find much to incite him in the following instances.

JOSEPH PENDRELL spent his days as a shoemaker. When he was a boy, he once happened to stop at a book-stall, where he saw a book of arithmetic marked fourpence. He bought it, and immediately began to study it. At the end of this volume there was a short introduction to mathematics. This awakened his curiosity, and he went on adding one book to another, and reading these at little snatches of time, until at length he reached the higher branches of mathematics. When he became a journeyman he used all possible economy in order to purchase books. Finding that many works on his favourite subject were written in French, he bought a grammar and dic-

tionary, and mastered this language. Then he proceeded to acquire the Latin and the Greek, and formed a collection of classical books. During all this progress, however, he kept himself concealed from public observation; but he contrived to make himself master of fortification, navigation, astronomy, and all the branches of natural philosophy. He also became versed in elegant literature. Pendrell died in London, in the seventy-fifth year of his age.

ALEXANDER MURRAY was a Scottish shepherd's boy, and was born in 1775. His father taught him the alphabet by writing it on the back of an old wool-card. He then learned to read in an old catechism, out of which he used to copy the letters. In 1782, he exchanged this for a psalm-book. Next he procured a New Testament, and read the historical books; and afterwards became the master of a loose-leaved Bible. He spent much of his time, while tending sheep, in writing on boards with a coal. In 1784, he attracted the notice of an uncle, who sent him to school; but this was only for one quarter, and then for five years he had no teacher. During this time he read nothing but penny ballads and the Bible. In 1787, he fell upon Josephus, and Salmon's Geography, of which he copied the maps. At twelve years of age he became teacher of the neighbour's

children, for which service his winter's remuneration was sixteen shillings ! After this he again went to school, pored over the arithmetic, perused the Spectator, and studied book-keeping. In 1790, he learned the Hebrew letters from the 119th psalm, in an old Bible. Then he studied French, and afterwards got an old Latin grammar, which he learned, comparing it with the French. So he went on, and with such patience that he carefully read the whole of a Latin dictionary. His next study was Milton's Paradise Lost, of which he never ceased to be an enthusiastic admirer. In 1791, he began the Greek, and also proceeded to apply himself in good earnest to the Hebrew. These languages he continued to cultivate, sometimes teaching, and sometimes labouring, but always depending on his own exertions. Thus he made progress, adding one attainment to another, till at length he became the author of a learned work, and professor of oriental languages in the university of Edinburgh.

Among modern critics and scholars there is no name more distinguished than that of WILLIAM GIFFORD, the founder and editor of the Quarterly Review. He was born at Ashburton, Devonshire, in 1765. Being left an orphan, and about being sent to the poor-house, he was put to school for awhile by his godfather, and learned a few of the

elements. Then he became a ship-boy on board of a coasting vessel, and performed the most menial duties. At the age of fourteen, he returned to school, where he distinguished himself; but up to this time his only reading had been the Bible, Thomas à Kempis, and an old romance. He was now apprenticed to a shoemaker, but was a very poor workman, and devoted many of his hours to arithmetic and algebra. His only book was a treatise on the latter of these sciences; and for lack of other conveniences, he used to work out his problems on leather, with a blunted awl. At this juncture he began to make verses, greatly to the displeasure of his master. Six years he drudged as a shoemaker, often sinking into the deepest melancholy, when, at the age of twenty, he was taken up by some kind patrons, and prepared for the University of Oxford. He afterwards became one of the most celebrated ornaments of modern literature.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD, the author of the *Farmer's Boy*, may here be mentioned. His father, who was a tailor, died before Robert was a year old, and all the education which the boy ever received, out of his mother's house, was two or three months' instruction in writing. At the age of eleven, he became a farmer's boy. At fifteen, he began to learn the shoemaker's trade with an

elder brother living in London. He worked in a garret with four others, and used to be selected to read the papers to the others. An English dictionary, cost fourpence, was the first book he possessed ; but after a while, the shoemakers took in weekly numbers of the British Traveller, a geography, and a History of England, which Robert read to them while they were at work. His brother calculates that he spent in this way about as many hours every week in reading, as boys generally do in play. "I, at this time," says the same brother, "read the London Magazine ; and in that work about two sheets were set apart for a review. Robert always seemed eager to read this review. Here he could see what the literary men were doing, and learn how to judge of the merits of the works that came out. And I observed that he always looked at the 'poets' corner.' And one day he repeated a song which he composed to an old tune. I was surprised that he should make so smooth verses ; so I persuaded him to try whether the editor of our paper would give them a place in 'poets' corner.' He succeeded, and they were printed." Such was his first leaning towards poetry. In this garret he composed the Farmer's Boy, amidst all the noise of the hammer and the last.

THOMAS HOLCROFT is well known as the au-

thor of "Hugh Trever," and other fictions. He was born in London, in 1745. His father was a shoemaker, and his mother a huckster of greens and oysters. For a very short time he was carried to a children's school by an apprentice of his father's. After the removal of the family into Berkshire, the boy learned to read, and this kind apprentice used to bring him little books from the metropolis. The mother became a pedler, and Thomas trotted after her through the country, sometimes begging, and often near starvation. Soon after this he became a stable-boy at Newmarket, where he picked up a few volumes, such as Gulliver's Travels, The Whole Duty of Man, and the Pilgrim's Progress. He practised arithmetic with an old nail upon the paling of the stable-yard. After two years thus spent, he rejoined his father, who now kept a cobbler's stall in South Audley street. At the age of twenty, he attempted to teach a school, but returned to the stall. Then he began to write for the newspapers: and such were the beginnings of a man who became in time a learned scholar, and a writer of some popularity.

XXXIII.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Examples of Self-instruction.

WHY may not the young artisan who takes up this volume become a learned man? The thing has been done before, and may be done again. Many a soul of genius is this moment buried in the shop and the factory. I shall proceed with my examples, availing myself of the authorities already mentioned.

The best beginning I can make is with the case of JAMES FERGUSON, the Scottish philosopher. James was the son of a day-labourer, and was born in 1710. Such was his early thirst for education, that he learned to read tolerably well before his father had any suspicion that he knew his letters. When about eight years of age, he began to make experiments with levers, which he called bars, and succeeded in discovering the great mechanical principle which regulates their operation. In the same manner he found out the law of the wheel and axle—being without books or teacher, or any tools but his father's turning-lathe

and a pocket-knife. He had actually written out an account of his supposed discoveries before he learned that the same things were contained in printed books. While employed as a shepherd's boy, he used to amuse himself, in the midst of his flock, by making models of spinning-wheels and mills; and at night he studied the starry heavens. His method was to wrap himself in a blanket, and, with a lighted candle, to lie for hours on his back in the open fields. "I used to stretch," says he, "a thread with small beads on it, at arm's length, between my eye and the stars, sliding the beads upon it till they hid such and such stars from my eye, in order to take their apparent distances from one another; and then laying the thread down on a paper, I marked the stars thereon by the beads." Mr. Gilchrist, the minister of Keith, coming to the knowledge of this, furnished him with compasses, ruler, pens, ink, and paper, and set him to copying maps. His kind master often took the flail out of his hands and worked himself, while James sat by him in the barn, busy with his pen, rule, and dividers. A neighbouring butler gave him some hints in dialling, decimal fractions, and algebra, and lent him books. Among these was a geography, which contained a description of a globe, but without any figure. This set Ferguson at

work, and he made a wooden ball, covered it with a map, and thus made the first artificial globe he ever saw. By the aid of this he solved problems.

Soon after this he became an invalid, and went into the service of a miller. Here he made a wooden clock, and afterwards a wooden watch, both of which kept time pretty well. From this he proceeded to clean clocks, to copy prints, and even to take likenesses; and followed the business of a painter for six-and-twenty years. Here we may leave him, after saying that his numerous works on philosophical subjects are still held in high esteem.

Next I adduce the case of THOMAS SIMPSON, the great mathematician. He was born in Leicestershire, in 1710. His father was a weaver, with whom Thomas, after learning to read imperfectly, began to learn his trade. But he loved books, and was resolved to be a scholar. This led to repeated quarrels with his father, who turned him out of doors. He found refuge in the house of a poor widow, and there stole a little time for reading. From a fortune-telling pedler, who pretended to astrology, he acquired some taste for astronomy. Cocker's Arithmetic and a book of algebra introduced him to the exact sciences. He became a schoolmaster for a time, but soon

returned to the loom, still making wonderful attainments in knowledge. Having heard of the mysteries of the differential calculus, he procured two works on fluxions, and not only mastered them, but qualified himself to write a book on this intricate subject, which was afterwards published, and gained great applause. After this time his mathematical publications rapidly followed one another; he became professor of mathematics at Woolwich and a fellow of the Royal Society, and died in 1761.

The next example is not less instructive, though it is that of a less celebrated man. ED-
MUND STONE was the son of the Duke of Argyle's gardener. As the duke was walking one day in his garden, he observed a Latin copy of Newton's "Principia" lying on the grass, and supposing it had been brought from his own library, called upon some one to carry it back. "Upon this," says his biographer, "Stone, who was then in his eighteenth year, claimed the book as his own. 'Yours?' replied the duke: 'do you understand geometry, Latin, and Newton?' 'I know a little of them,' replied the young man. The duke was surprised; and, having a taste for the sciences, he entered into conversation with the young mathematician. He asked him several

questions; and was astonished at the force, the accuracy, and the candour of his answers. ‘But how,’ said the duke, ‘came you by the knowledge of all these things?’ Stone replied, ‘A servant taught me, ten years ago, to read. *Does one need to know more than the twenty-four letters in order to learn every thing else that one wishes?*’ The duke’s curiosity redoubled: he sat down on a bank, and requested a detail of the whole process by which he had become so learned.

“‘I first learned to read;’ said Stone: ‘the masons were then at work on your house. I approached them one day, and observed that the architect used a rule and compass, and that he made calculations. I inquired what might be the meaning and use of these things, and I was informed that there was a science called arithmetic. I purchased a book of arithmetic, and learned it. I was told there was another science called geometry; I bought the necessary books, and learned geometry. By reading, I found that there were good books in these two sciences in Latin; I bought a dictionary, and I learned Latin. I understood, also, that there were good books of the same kind in French; I bought a dictionary, and I learned French. And this, my lord, is what

I have done : it seems to me that we may learn every thing when we know the twenty-four letters of the alphabet.' ” Stone also became a useful mathematical writer, and a member of the Royal Society ; and though he is by no means to be compared with Simpson, yet it was one of Stone's books from which Simpson acquired his first knowledge of fluxions.

To my other instances I might add those of three Americans, who are all living, all working printers, and, if I mistake not, all journeymen. From motives of delicacy, I must suppress names, but the truth of the statement can be abundantly vouched by many who will peruse these pages. The first is the case of a self-taught man in the city of Albany, well known as an excellent workman, and no less so among scientific men as one of the most profound mathematicians in America. The second case is that of a younger man, residing in Brooklyn, who, amidst the labours of the composing-desk and the press, has found time to make himself thorough master of the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and German languages, and is, moreover, one of the few men in the United States who are versed in the Arabic tongue. The third is a journeyman in the printing house of the American Sunday-school Union, whose poetical effusions, under the signature of T. McK.,

though as yet little noticed, would not discredit more famous pens.*

In closing this paper, let me earnestly recommend to every inquiring mechanic, a book by Professor Edwards, of Andover, entitled the "Biography of Self-taught Men."

* I subjoin the shortest piece of this writer's that I can find.

THE SYCAMORE BOUGH.

Upon an ancient sycamore
 A noble bough there grew,
 And fostered myriads of leaves
 That hid itself from view.
 When winter came with angry breath,
 The bough was brown and bare ;
 Gone were the summer-hearted leaves
 That once were nurtured there.

Thus with vain man. In summer days
 The world around him clings ;
 It guiles his heart, and o'er his faults
 A leafy mantle flings ;
 It blinds him, till the bitter day
 Of pain and death comes on,—
 And leaves him, then, to bear his woes
 Unaided and alone.

Not so the lowly man who walks
 The path that Jesus trod,—
 Who daily learns to die ; whose " life
 Is hid with Christ in God."
 The world can ne'er between his soul
 And God's love intervene ;
 In joy or sorrow, life or death,
 His hope is evergreen.

XXXIV.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Clarke—Coleman—Drew—Hill—Wild.

THERE have been few instances, in our day, of more successful perseverance against difficulties, than that of the great commentator, doctor ADAM CLARKE. Though not a mechanic, he had to surmount obstacles as great as those which lie in the path of most working-men. It is known that at the time of his death he took rank among the most learned men of the age; yet, in 1782, he was a poor Methodist preacher; and they who are acquainted with the labours of this indefatigable class, know that they have any thing but an easy life. The toils of journeying did not, however, prevent his learning. He had already made some progress in Latin, Greek, and French, but these he was forced to intermit in some degree, having to travel several miles every day, and to preach, on an average, thirty days in each month. That he might not lose the whole time which he was obliged to employ in riding,

he accustomed himself to read on horseback. In this way he read many volumes. He also began the study of Hebrew, in which he afterwards became such a proficient

In his biographical sketch of himself, he gives some account of another Methodist preacher, named ANDREW COLEMAN, who, though a poor youth, and destitute of the ordinary helps to education, "attained to such a pitch of mental cultivation before his seventeenth year, as few have been able to acquire in the course of a long life. He became master of the Latin and Greek languages, and made considerable progress in Hebrew. To these studies he joined geometry, astronomy, chronology, history, and most branches of the mathematics. When he was about fourteen years of age, he had the whole of the Common Prayer by heart. He had made himself such a master of the *Æneid* of Virgil, and the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, at the same age, that on the mention of any line in either of these poems, he could immediately tell the book in which it occurs, and the number of the line."*

At this point, I might adduce the late remarkable metaphysician, SAMUEL DREW. First a poor boy, and then a working shoemaker, he became one of the closest thinkers and most profound

* Clarke's Life, vol. i. p. 63.

reasoners of our age. Whatever may be thought of his opinions, no one can fail to admire the talent displayed in his works on the resurrection, the immortality of the soul, and the being and attributes of God. Samuel Drew was born in the parish of St. Austell, in Cornwall, March 3, 1765. He was the son of a poor labourer. All he ever learned at any school was his alphabet. At the age of seven, he was obliged to go to work, his wages being twopence a day. At the age of ten years and a half, he was bound apprentice to a shoemaker, in the parish of St. Blazey. During his apprenticeship he made some progress in reading, chiefly by means of a paper called the Weekly Entertainer. Nothing in this journal, he tells us, so much excited his attention, as the adventures, vicissitudes, and disasters to which the American war gave rise. On setting up for himself, as he did near Plymouth, he lost his opportunities of reading, which he did not regain until, after four years, he became, at St. Austell, the foreman of a shoemaker, saddler, and bookbinder, who afterwards removed to America. Here he had various books, and read diligently; though his knowledge of hard words was so scanty that he had to make perpetual use of a dictionary. Among other books brought to be bound, he had access to Locke's Essay.

He had never heard of it before. He read it with admiration, nay, amazement. It opened to him a new world, and made him a metaphysician for life. For several years, all his leisure hours were given to reading; but he tells us this never interrupted his business.

Perhaps Drew might never have become an author, if it had not been for an attempt made by a young gentleman to convert him to the opinions of Thomas Paine. The attempt failed, and Drew wrote down his answers to Paine, which, in 1799, appeared in a pamphlet, being his first publication. The reviewers praised the work, and the humble author continued to write and publish; nor did he cease until he had become known to the British public as the writer of several profound works on the most recondite points in philosophy.

Among these instances of self-instruction, it would be wrong to omit the name of ROBERT HILL. He was born in Hertfordshire, in 1699. At the age of fifteen, he was bound apprentice to a tailor, with whom he remained the usual term. In 1716, he chanced to get hold of broken copies of the Latin grammar and dictionary. He had already acquired the habit of sitting up the greater part of every night at his books, but he now received a powerful incitement to the study

of languages. During a prevalence of the small-pox, which drove him away from his former residence in Buckingham, he kept his uncle's sheep, in which employment he was very happy; "for," said he, "I could lie under a hedge and read all day long." On his return home, he resumed his Latin, and used to bribe the schoolboys, by small favours, to help him over his difficulties. He would willingly run on an errand, in consideration of being taught the meaning of some word which was not in his dictionary. Before he ended his apprenticeship, he had read a good part of Caesar, and of the Latin Testament. The next event was his receiving, as a present, copies of Homer and the Greek Testament. This was enough to start him with a new language; accordingly he taught a young gentleman to fish, in return for a Greek grammar, and some instructions. In 1724, he opened a school, which he taught for six or seven years. But, unfortunately, at his beginning he had only ciphered "a little way into division," and had, nevertheless, to teach arithmetic. One of his scholars had proceeded as far as decimal fractions. Hill adopted the following plan: he set his pupil, by way of preliminary exercise, to copy a series of tables, which had some apparent relation to the subject of his intended studies. This occupied

six weeks, during which the poor master often sat up nearly the whole night, in order to get a little in advance of his pupil. A few years after this, he bought a lot of thirteen Hebrew books, for as many shillings, and succeeded in learning this language also. Such were his methods, which need not detain us longer. Hill died in 1777.

Let the working-man who reads this, lay down the book for an instant, and ask himself, how much he might have acquired, if he had possessed the same thirst for knowledge; nay, how much he might still learn. For the encouragement of diffident minds, let it be noticed, that Hill was by no means what is called a genius. His attainments were made by dogged perseverance, such as the apprentice who reads this might use with equal success. He acquired every thing slowly. He said himself that he had been seven years learning Latin, and twice as long learning Greek; and though he declared that he could teach any person Hebrew in six weeks, he had to struggle alone against very great difficulties. "When I was saying to him," says Spence, his biographer, "that I was afraid his studies must have broke in upon his other business too much; he said that sometimes they had a little; but that his usual way had been to sit up very deep into the nights,

or else to rise by two or three in the morning, on purpose to get time for reading, without prejudicing himself in his trade." He lived to be seventy-eight years old.*

From the same invaluable book, in the Library of Entertaining Knowledge, which supplied me with several examples, I borrow one more, which shall be my last in this connexion.

HENRY WILD, of Norfolk, was also a tailor. During seven years of service under his indenture, and seven more as a journeyman, he forgot all that he had previously learned at school. A lingering fever laid him aside from his trade, and he amused himself with some theological work, in which he met with Hebrew quotations. This determined him to become a scholar. By hard labour he became able to read Latin, of which he had known something when a child. Then he proceeded to Hebrew, using a lexicon in which the meanings of the words were given in Latin. "While he was thus engaged, his health gradually improved, and he was enabled to return to his business; but he did not, for all that, neglect his studies. After working all day, his general practice was to sit up reading for a great part of the night, deeming himself far more than

* Pursuit of Knowledge, vol. i. p. 352

compensated for his labours and privations, by obtaining, even at this sacrifice, a few hours every week for the pursuit he loved : and in this manner, within seven years, he had actually made himself master of the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, and Persian languages. Yet his extraordinary attainments seem not to have been generally known till a fortunate accident introduced him to the notice of Dean Prideaux, a distinguished proficient in oriental learning. Dr. Prideaux soon after exerted himself to raise a small subscription for this poor and meritorious scholar, by which means he was sent to Oxford, not to be entered at the University, but that he might have access to the libraries, and find a more appropriate occupation for his talents, in teaching those oriental tongues with which he had in so wonderful a manner contrived to make himself acquainted." The students gave him the name of the *Arabian tailor*.

My readers may never choose to become great linguists ; but the same assiduity will have the same results in any other part of the ample field of knowledge. Nor can I believe that these, my hasty recitals of such facts, can altogether fail to stir up some aspiring minds.

XXXV.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Encouragement to make a beginning.

THERE is something pleasant in the anecdote which Boswell relates concerning Dr. Johnson and a boy who rowed him down the Thames. The two friends were conversing upon the use of learning, when Johnson said, "This boy rows us as well without learning, as if he could sing the song of Orpheus to the Argonauts, who were the first sailors." He then called to the boy, "What would you give, my lad, to know about the Argonauts?" "Sir," said the boy, "I would give what I have." Johnson was much pleased with his answer, and gave him a double fare. Dr. Johnson then turned to his companion and said, "Sir, the desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind; and every human being, whose mind is not debauched, will be willing to give all that he has to get knowledge."

This truth is manifest, and I am persuaded that many thousands of working-men would be engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, if it were not

for their ignorance of the way to set about it, and their magnifying the difficulties of the task. Hence it is that I have gone to what some may think a tedious length in the citation of examples, to show that every sort of obstacle has been surmounted, and every sort of attainment made, by men of ordinary talents. In considering the cases which have been detailed, you will find them so various, that the individuals have nothing in common except *a determination to learn*. Where this exists, the man will succeed; no matter what method he takes. The Greek proverb says, *Love learning, and you will get learning*. Set about it—at once—at any subject—with any book—and you will not fail. Not that I would undervalue regular system. Method is invaluable, and a methodical man will do twice as much in a day as his neighbour, just as a good packer will put twice as much into a trunk. Yet the most untoward beginnings, if followed up, will end in something. If a man were bent upon clearing a certain forest, it would undoubtedly be best for him to observe some order, and go forward in such a way that the trees should not fall over each other, or obstruct his road: yet if he should neglect this, and begin anywhere, and work in any way, provided he continued moving, he could not fail in time to accomplish his work.

I make this observation for the encouragement of those who are disheartened by the want of any directions, and by ignorance of the way to begin.

The ancients tell us that Cato learned Greek in his old age. Let me entreat those who have passed the prime of life without much education not to give up in despair. They may not learn every thing ; but they may learn enough to shed a serene pleasure around their declining days. I have myself had pupils in spelling, who were nearly seventy years of age. A new life is given by education, even to elderly persons, when the imagination and the heart begin to be cultivated, and they learn to extend their views beyond the little circle of visible objects. "In such men," says Dugald Stewart, "what an accession is gained by their most refined pleasures ! What enchantments are added to their most ordinary perceptions ! The mind awakening, as if from a trance to a new existence, becomes habituated to the most interesting aspects of life and of nature : the intellectual eye is 'purged of its film ;' and things, the most familiar and unnoticed, disclose charms invisible before." The same objects and events which were lately beheld with indifference, occupy now all the powers and capacities of the soul—the contrast between the present and the past serving only to enhance and endear so un-

looked-for an acquisition. What Gray has so finely said of *the pleasures of vicissitude*, conveys but a faint image of what is experienced by the man who, after having lost in vulgar occupations and vulgar amusements his earliest and most precious years, is thus introduced at last to a new heaven and a new earth :

The meanest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise."

Fix in your minds the maxim, that of knowledge, as of gold, the minutest fragments are valuable. I have often wished that Pope had never penned that much-abused couplet :

"*A little knowledge is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.*"

It has frightened many an humble pilgrim from the paths of science. The verses contain an important truth, when understood in their connexion as applicable to smatterers in classical literature ; but in their vulgar acceptation they are false and dangerous. There is no sense in which a *little knowledge* is more dangerous than a little of any other good thing. *Great* knowledge is undoubtedly better ; but even a grain of knowledge is good, so far as it goes. A few moments' reflection will

set any man's mind at rest on this point. You are afraid of a "little knowledge:" but, with all your fears, you already possess a little. Do you suppose that you are the worse for this? Has this little proved dangerous? Small as it is—are you willing to lose it? Not at all. If a *little* knowledge is a dangerous thing, (it has been well said,) *make it more.*

Where the avidity for information is great, all such apprehensions will vanish. The humblest attainments will have their value, and the learner will be disposed to avail himself of the most trifling accessions to his stock. Take the following authentic statement, made by one whose early education had been neglected.

“My boyhood and youth are now over, and, in reviewing my past career, I am sensible of many errors of conduct, and many omissions of the duty which each man owes to himself; but in advert-
ing to the particular period I have mentioned, I am at a loss to perceive how, under all the cir-
cumstances, I could better have employed the un-
controlled and unguided leisure of my boyhood than I did. During this period, and subsequently, in the intervals of manual occupation, I read with eagerness every printed thing that fell in my way
—from the placard on the wall, and the torn newspaper gathered from the street, to volumes

from the shelves of my neighbours—and from the nursery-book and the fairy-tale, to the poetry of Milton and the metaphysics of Locke. Thus, in the progress of years, I gathered together a considerable quantity of general knowledge, mixed with much rubbish and unprofitable matter. I gathered this knowledge together in solitude and silence, without the cognizance, direction, encouragement, or control of any living soul. I was even stirred by reading to think and to write for myself; and I acquired the power of expressing what I thought or wished to state, just as I now express it to you.”

My great end will have been accomplished, if I can lodge deeply in the reader's mind two convictions: first, that knowledge is *desirable*; secondly, that it is *attainable*. He who has received the due impression of these two truths, may be safely left to himself. In my next I shall attempt to give a few useful hints in regard to the pursuit of knowledge.

XXXVI

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Hints and Directions.

LET not the reader expect too much from this title ; for, after all, the grand direction is, TRY—TRY—TRY. Yet a few general counsels may prove useful to such as are entering upon an untried way. The great object in all pursuit of knowledge is, the formation of habits ; and the earlier one begins to form good habits the better. Therefore, I would address the remarks of the present paper more especially to apprentices and young journeymen ; while, at the same time, they have an application to working-men of any age, who are addicting themselves to study. I will now proceed to offer the following directions.

1. *Begin at once.* Do not put off your learning till some better opportunity. The first blow is half the battle. This is eminently true in the matter of study. There is always a difficulty in beginning. It is like the starting of a car on the railway : overcome the first resistance, and the

remaining progress is easy. It might take a little time to "get your hand in," but not so long as you suppose. Begin from this very day; resolve—as you now sit and read these lines—that you will commence the work of self-improvement. Take time by the forelock; or, if you have already lost a good part of your life, acknowledge this as a strong reason why you should husband that which remains. If you can only bring yourself to take the first step, there will be a good hope of your continuance.

2. *Learn something every day.* If you read only by fits and starts, you will probably lose a great deal in the intervals. It is by slight, but perpetually repeated strokes, that the iron is wrought into shape. Begin every morning with the inquiry, "What can I add to my stock this day?" In this respect, act with regard to knowledge, as you are ready enough to do with regard to money. We are all wise about the wealth of the world; but learning is wealth. I could take all the maxims of frugality, and show how they apply to the accumulation of knowledge. "A pin a day is a groat a year." Consider no day's work as complete, unless you have tried to learn something useful.

3. *Set a value on the smallest morsels of knowledge.* These fragments are the dust of

diamonds. Of these fragments the mass of learning is composed. "It is true," as Poor Richard says, "there is much to be done, and perhaps you are weak-handed; but stick to it steadily, and you will see great effects, for constant dropping wears away stones; and by diligence and patience the mouse ate in two the cable; and little strokes fell great oaks." A man may learn that in two minutes which may be valuable to him all his life. Even if you see no use in the thing learned, do not despise it. Learn all that you can, and you will live to see its value. Never let slip an opportunity of gaining a new idea. And remember that the beginnings, even of the most sublime sciences, are often so simple as to seem worthless.

4. *Redeem time for study.* The busiest workman can spare some moments. If you mean to get wisdom, you must learn the value of moments. Great attainments have been made in these little snatches. Whether you work or play, do it in earnest; but never be unemployed an instant. Unstable and indolent people lose much of life in thinking what they shall do next. Always have a book within reach, which you may catch up at your odd minutes. It is incredible, until trial has been made, how much real knowledge may be acquired in these broken scraps of

time. Resolve to edge in a little reading every day, if it is but a single sentence. The man who pursues this method will infallibly become learned. Take a little time for reading from each end of your night's rest. If you can gain fifteen minutes a day, it will make itself felt at the close of the year. I have sometimes thought that the mind acts with double vigour when forced into these brief periods of application. By degrees, you will learn to save moments from recreation, from idle talk, and even from work. And in the long winter evenings, you will certainly be inexcusable, if you do not devote an hour or two to your books.

5. *Regulate your thoughts when not at study.* A man is thinking even while at work: why may he not be thinking about what is useful? Study is intended to discipline the mind; let your mind be kept under check and rein, while your hands are employed. Revolve in your mind what you have last been reading. Commit useful things to your memory, and turn these over in your thoughts, while you ply the hammer or the wheel. Remember that most of the matchless effusions of Robert Burns were conceived while he was toiling after his plough. Moreover, there is such a thing as study without books. Keep your mind in an inquiring mood,

and you cannot be in any situation where you may not be learning.

6. *Try to get companions in learning.* Every one has felt the pleasure and profit of having a companion in a journey. It is the same thing in the pursuit of knowledge. The way is thus made lighter, and even shorter. If you have no acquaintance who is rightly disposed, seek to inspire some friend with the desire of knowledge; you will thus be benefiting another as well as yourself. If possible, however, attach yourself to one who is somewhat in advance of you; he will be a sort of instructor and guide; and this will prove a great saving of time and labour. Where two persons are engaged in the same pursuits, they encourage one another, and find a stimulus in the little amicable rivalry which is awakened. Above all, talk with some companion, as often as possible, about the subject of your reading. Conversation about what we study is almost as useful an exercise as the study itself. Not only does each communicate the light which he has gained himself, but new sparks are struck out by the collision of mind with mind. There will be also an exchange of books, and each will alight upon plans and methods which might not have occurred to the other.

7. *Seek the advice and aid of some man of*

education. This is not indispensable, but highly to be desired. In travelling an intricate road, it is well to be guided by one who has passed it before us. I am sure that half the labour of a lifetime may be saved in this way. There is scarcely any man of real learning who would not take pleasure in lending a helping hand to a beginner. Young mechanics are too diffident in this matter. Any young man who has difficulties in his solitary studies, may feel assured that he will be welcomed by the true scholar whom he goes to consult. I cannot call to mind an instance in which applications of this kind have failed to give pleasure. You will particularly need advice about the books which you should read. There are elementary, or first books, in every branch of knowledge. If you begin with one of these, much unnecessary trouble will be avoided, and you will have less need of a teacher. Get from your most approved adviser a list of such books as you should from time to time procure.

8. *Lay aside a little money for books.* If you love learning, I need not say a word about the value of books. A little economy will enable you soon to have a little collection of your own. When I consider how much is squandered by apprentices upon superfluous dress, trinkets, horses and vehicles, strong drink, tobacco and

cigars, I see at once a fund from which many a little library might be founded.

9. *Be not discouraged by the seeming slowness of your progress.* All progress in learning is by imperceptible degrees. You cannot see the minute hand of your watch move; yet it completes its circle eight thousand seven hundred and sixty times every year. Call to mind the steps by which you learned your trade; in any given week you could discern no advancement. The growth of knowledge is like the growth of the body; you do not feel yourself growing, but you know that you have grown, by comparison at long intervals. Be of good cheer, delay not, and you will one day thank me for my counsels.

XXXVII.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Reading.

LET no great scholar read this essay. It is meant for those whose education has been neglected, and who are willing to go back and lay the first stone of the structure. The subject is, the *Art of Reading*.

If our system of popular education was what it ought to be, no boy of fourteen would be put out to a trade, without a thorough acquaintance with reading, writing, arithmetic, and plain composition. If parents and guardians were awake to their duty, the same result would take place. But as matters now stand, it is an undeniable truth, that not more than half our young apprentices are even good readers.

Reading is rather an instrument than a part of education. It is the indispensable key. Many are said to know how to read, who still find the greatest difficulty in picking out the sense of a common paragraph in the newspapers. Others can, indeed, spell out the words, but the effort is

such as to absorb their whole minds, and to leave them scarcely any ability to catch the train of ideas. Now, it should be laid down as a principle, that no man is yet a reader, who has not so much facility that he never considers it a task, or finds any more labour in it than in eating his daily food. This is to be gained only by constant practice.

Again, there are persons who take pleasure in the solitary and silent perusal of books, while they are ashamed or afraid to read aloud for the benefit of others. Their pronunciation is barbarous; they stammer, and hesitate, and miscall the words; they have no idea of giving proper expression to what they utter. They are, therefore, unfit to teach their children, or even to entertain their friends.

The proper remedy for these evils is to be sought in careful and constant practice; and especially in reading aloud; which, besides being a useful accomplishment, is highly advantageous to the health, and is recommended by the best physicians, as a preservative of the lungs. All this may be gained without any self-denial, by the custom of reading the papers, or other entertaining publications, during the intervals of labour. This is an advantage possessed by mechanics whose operations are sedentary and within doors;

and this, I suppose, will go far to account for the fact, that learned men have so frequently proceeded from the shops of tailors and shoemakers. It would be vain for the bricklayer, the blacksmith, or the ship-carpenter, to attempt such an exercise, amidst the clang of the hammer and the adze; but the privilege may frequently be enjoyed by the saddler, the painter, and the watchmaker. There is no shop in which there is not occasionally an individual waiting for his work, or otherwise unemployed. In such cases, how much improvement and satisfaction might be derived from a wise economy of the odd minutes! The case of Bloomfield, already mentioned, may be referred to as an illustration. Even the little boys of the family might sometimes be introduced for the same purpose. But, as my present subject is improvement in reading, nothing will be effectually gained, unless the person who feels his deficiency actually practises himself. And here let me earnestly warn every young mechanic against that wretched and ruinous false-shame, which would tempt him to avoid the means of learning, for the sake of concealing his ignorance. However gross your defects may be, do not scruple to make them known: in no other way can they be supplied. You will find it to have been the invariable practice of all who have

become eminent, to confess their ignorance, as the first step towards acquisition. Every man is ignorant of something; but it is the part of the truly wise to be constantly filling up these vacancies, in every practicable way.

With this principle in view, the apprentice, or the journeyman, or even the master-mechanic, who feels the shame and loss of ignorance, will slight no methods of improvement. If he cannot get the private instruction of some more gifted friend, he will seek the advantages of a night-school, or club with some half dozen of his acquaintances to secure the assistance of a teacher for an hour or two during the week. As I have hinted, there is but a small proportion of our working-men who can be called good readers; and yet there is, perhaps, no man who, during the course of his life, is not placed in circumstances where the want of this facility is the source of loss or mortification. In public meetings or committees, the routine of ordinary business often demands the reading of papers, and a man must have at least forty years over his head before he can decline the office under the pretext of having forgotten his spectacles. Most of all is this element of education necessary in training up a family of children. Even if a man can contrive to get through the world without ever reading a pleasant anecdote

to his wife—how is it possible for him to do his part by his children, if he is unable either to instruct them by books, or to help them in their tasks? How can he act as the domestic priest and religious head of his household, if he is unfit to read with them a chapter in the Bible, or a family prayer? I have said little about literal and absolute inability to read, because I would really flatter myself that few working-men among us are in this sad condition; and because such persons, by the very supposition, are out of the reach of my essays: but more is needed than what is called reading in our hedge-schools; and which often partakes more of the qualities of whining, snuffing, and singing, than of human elocution. If then, among the readers of this volume, there should happen to be even *one*, who, after spelling out my meaning, has been made sensible of his neglects, and desirous of redeeming lost time, let me affectionately clap him on the shoulder by way of encouragement: my good fellow, it is never too late to learn!

Such is the benignity of Providence, that the things which are most necessary are most accessible. Among all human arts, there is none more rich in its fruits than the art of reading; and there is none more easily acquired. Resolve to make up for lost time; acknowledge your im-

perfections ; begin in the right way, and you will assuredly succeed

Without such facility in reading as may allow the mind to follow without distraction the current of an author's thought, there can be no real pleasure in the exercise. And where there is no taste for reading, a man's school-learning is of little value. How many are there who have gone to school, and have books in their houses, who yet are making no improvement in knowledge ! If, for form's sake, they open a volume and turn over the leaves, you see by the vacant eye and sleepy countenance that they have no pleasure in it. The task is heavy ; and after a few yawns, and perhaps nods, they lay the book aside, or let it drop, to find more congenial satisfaction in the arm-chair or the pipe. On the other hand, if you read with ease, you will read with pleasure, and will have opened to you the door of universal knowledge. As Edmund Stone said to the Duke of Argyle : " It seems to me that we may know every thing, when we know how to read. Does one need to know any thing more than the twenty-four letters, to learn every thing else that one wishes ? "

XXXVIII.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Writing.

By working so long under ground, among the rude foundations, I am likely to deter from the perusal of these essays all who think themselves already well-informed. Such an effect will give me no concern, as I shall be the better able to lay a broad and solid basis for the structure, without the interference of critical or conceited meddlers. My business lies with the working-man, and most of all with him who frankly owns that he knows but little, and would fain know more. My heart warms at even the remote probability that these lines, penned in solitude, and often in weakness and pain, may prove a guiding light to one or two of my industrious fellow-citizens. But lest I wax sentimental, let me proceed to the *Art of Writing*.

I now use the term *writing* in a wide sense, including *orthography*, or what is commonly called spelling, because our proficiency in this is evinced only in what we write; and *plain com*

position; but for which the mere manual dexterity is of little account.

One might readily suppose that every mechanic and tradesman would be desirous to write a fair and legible hand. The clergyman, the professor, or the man of wealth, may scrawl the vilest pot-hooks and hieroglyphics, and yet manage to avoid exposure; but the working-man has his books to keep and his accounts to render. His writing is therefore seen by hundreds; and we are all very apt to form some notion of a man's neatness and general improvement from the way in which he handles his pen. It is needless to say that not one in fifty possesses this accomplishment. Alas for our common schools! Alas for the indolence and indifference of our young men! I will not dwell long on this part of the subject, but I do seriously maintain, that every man who has his complement of fingers, and resolution to begin at the beginning, and set himself regular copies, may attain to a decent, clear, and intelligible hand. And, by so doing, many a man might avoid the mortification which has been known to ensue upon the exhibition of a day-book in a court of justice. In order to write well, one must have so far mastered the manual operation as to write with some pleasure. If our schools were what they should be, this matter

would be secured before boys enter upon their apprenticeship. At present, I dare say there are not a few mechanics who find less trouble in the manufacture of a table or a boat, than in drawing off a fair copy of a bill.

But suppose the mere handwriting to be unexceptionable, there is another matter which is quite as important, namely the art of *spelling*. So far as my observation goes, orthography is never adequately learned without the practice of writing. It is one thing to get by rote endless columns of words in a spelling-book, and another thing to take a pen and write off the same words promptly and accurately. I could show laughable specimens from my files of accounts, and I presume every reader can do the like. This evil often betrays itself in a way somewhat mortifying, when a man rises in the world, and is invested with public office. There is within my knowledge a very worthy personage, a justice of the peace, whose records of evidence are among the rarest curiosities in the collections of the lawyers who have made them laughing-stocks. Some ten or twelve years since, I visited a hall of legislation not a thousand miles from our state capital. The barrier between the dignitaries and their constituents had not then been elevated so as to shut out the pragmatistical glances of saucy observers ;

and as I leaned over the railing, just behind a portly legislator, my eye undesignedly fell on the engrossed title of a bill, the topmost in the little tape-tied parcel on the assembly-man's desk. He had intended to entitle it "Bill concerning Horse-racing—postponed." Instead of this, I beheld, in a very legible copyhand, the following words—

BILL AGAINST HORS RASSING—
POSPONDED.

Those who are willing to mend their ways in this particular, should furnish themselves with a good copy of Johnson's or Walker's Dictionary; they should consult this whenever they are in doubt; and they should cherish their doubts, in order to secure themselves against that blindness to their own errors, into which every man is tempted to fall.

Yet all this is merely instrumental, and in order to something beyond itself. Under writing I include *plain composition*, but for the sake of which a man might safely be ignorant of pen and ink. Let me distinctly say that I am far from summoning the young mechanic to attempt any thing like authorship, or even elegant composition. But it is certainly desirable that every one should have the ability to sit down, and without

hesitation or embarrassment, express with his pen such things as he daily has to express with his voice. He should know how to write a decent letter, not merely in a fair hand and correct spelling, but without grammatical blunders or awkward construction. Every man who has friends or customers will sometimes need to write a business letter; and weighty interests may sometimes depend on the manner in which this is done. And any man who can pen a creditable letter, without vulgarity or affectation, will be in the same degree able to prepare a resolution at a public meeting, to draft the report of a committee, or to compose a memorial. Where is the American freeman who is not liable to be called to some such service? This is a branch of education which should be taught in every common school; and if it has been neglected, he who is sensible of his defect should spare no pains to repair it.

XXXIX.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Grammar.

IF there is any one thing which more than all others distinguishes the improved from the unimproved man, it is the manner in which he uses his mother tongue. Apparel does not form such a distinction, for the richest dress is often the disguise of the simpleton. Big words and lofty periods are so far from designating the man of information, that they are most common with the smatterer and the pedant. But perfectly grammatical English is the infallible countersign of an educated mind. It is too late to attempt the cure of a bad habit in regard to language, when one has passed his prime; this subject is therefore important to young men. Your business may prosper; your wealth may increase; you may live in splendour, and imitate the manners of the great; you may even grow purse-proud and scorn your former associates; but all this will be in vain if you cannot open your lips without breaking

“Priscian’s head.” Your grandeur will be only a costly frame for a show of ignorance.

It is not by merely committing to memory pages of rules, however excellent, that any one becomes a grammarian. Many persons are able to repeat dozens of rules, which they break even while they are talking of them. The best method of gaining the desired accuracy, is to converse with those who never blunder in their English: thus the children of educated men come to speak correctly, even before they have learned a word of the book. The next best method is to seek with care the discovery of all your common errors. If it were not for false shame—the greatest bane of self-instruction—this might soon be accomplished. Nothing is necessary but to ask some literary friend to point out to you every case in which you trip. And this will soon prove effectual: for, be it observed, solecisms, or grammatical mistakes, are of such a nature, that if a man makes them at all, he will make them repeatedly. You may be assured, that in three or four conversations of an hour’s length, you will be likely to fall into every error of this kind to which you are liable. I have friends who are men of sense and knowledge, but whose sad breaches of grammatical propriety expose them to ridicule. How often have I wished that their

feelings would allow me to show them the cases in which they offend! In a fortnight, I feel persuaded, they might succeed in freeing themselves from this blemish forever.

But supposing that only such as have a very strong purpose to excel, and some elevation of mind, will avail themselves of the foregoing hint, I would propose, as an alternative, the use of a good grammar; which, indeed, ought not to be neglected in any case. In the choice of a grammar, we should be regulated, not by the transient popularity of some late production, but by the solid judgment of literary men in the mother country as well as in America. We speak the blessed tongue of good old England: may we ever continue to be one in language. The books of worthy Lindley Murray are still unsurpassed, so far as principles are concerned; and any man will be safe who frames his diction after the guidance of this gentle Anglo-American Quaker.

It must be observed, however, that the portion of any grammar which is of most value to one who is to be his own instructor, is that which consists of *exercises*. Here you will find specimens of every sort of error, and in reading them you will descry many an old acquaintance. Carefully and repeatedly write these off in their cor-

rect form. There is no surer way of detecting and weeding out your ungrammatical expressions. Examine a list of erroneous phrases, and you will find many such as these, which perhaps have escaped from your own lips in earlier days, viz : “I *seen* John when he *done* it.” “He *plead* not guilty.” “He writes *like* I do.” “He is *considerable of* a scholar.” “I *telled* him that he *drink’d* too much.” “The carriage or the sleigh *were* sent.” “You *hadn’t ought* to have come,” &c. But I am almost ashamed to have inserted even these : in Dr. Bullions’ grammar you will find pages of such blunders exposed and corrected.

There is another class of expressions, which offend, not so exactly against grammar, as against purity and propriety of language. Lists of these have been made out by Pickering and other eminent scholars ; but still they are used by newspaper editors and certain members of congress. For example : “I *calculate* to leave Boston.” “He *conducts* well.” “I *expect* he was there.” “The event *transpired*, (that is ‘occurred,’) on Friday.” “The bill was *predicated* on these facts.” “An article *over* the signature of Cato.” “James went up *on to* the ship.” “I was *raised* in Kentucky.” “He is an *ugly* man,” meaning an ill-tempered man. “He has too much

temper ;” using the word in a bad sense, whereas in sound English it always has a good one.

There is a single caution which it may be useful to add : there is such a thing as overstraining grammar. There are those who make efforts so strenuous, as to fall over upon the other side. I can scarcely suppose that my reader could so far mistake as to say “ Charles and *me* went to New York ;” yet I have heard even ladies and gentlemen uttering as great a solecism, by saying, “ He gave the books to Charles and *I*.” Not quite so bad is the obsolete participle “ *gotten*” for “ *got* ;” a nicety in going backwards which prevails chiefly among elderly ladies. Every one has heard physicians speak of “ three *spoonsfull*,” instead of “ three *spoonfuls* ;” though the same persons would scruple to say “ three *cartload*” for “ three *cartloads*,” or “ three *mouthsfull*” for “ three *mouthfuls*.” In fact, different ideas are conveyed by the two phrases. So, likewise, a certain class of affected smatterers use this form—“ The house is *being built*.” In good English there is no such participle as *being built* in this sense. No example can be found in the British classics. A learned writer judiciously observes : “ If the expression *is being built* be a correct form of the present indicative passive,

then it must be equally correct to say in the present-perfect, *has been being built* ; in the past-perfect, *had been being built* ; and in the present participle *being being built.*" Enough of this. I now close this dry communication, hoping, after one more essay, to recover a more sprightly strain.

XL.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Arithmetic and Accounts.

IF there is any part of science which is indispensable to mechanics in common with other men in business, it is that which forms the subject of this paper. Every tradesman is supposed to keep regular accounts, and as his affairs become more extended, these become more complicated. If we could look into the secret causes of the numerous bankruptcies which occur, we should find a large proportion of them to have their origin in a defect just here. The apprentice is left to grow up without adequate instruction. He learns his trade, it may be, but he learns nothing more. He becomes a journeyman, and finds here no inducement to supply his deficiencies. In due course of time he sets up for himself, and then discovers, much too late, that there are difficulties and perplexities, even in the most ordinary routine of business, for which he is altogether unprepared.

Men could be named who have to study an

hour before they can foot up the amount of a customer's bill for a few dollars; and the simplest questions in interest or discount, which have, unhappily, become every-day transactions among us, are to them mysteries altogether past comprehension. No person can be considered fit for the management of any lucrative and flourishing enterprise, who is not able, whenever it is necessary, to arrive at a clear view of his liabilities and resources, a fair balance per contra of his whole affairs. And, for safety and comfort, this is an operation which should frequently take place. Next to a good conscience, it is desirable for every mechanic to have a good leger. Now, if the very sight of his books gives him the horrors, and if he would rather work a week than spend half a day over his desk of accounts, it is very plain that he will be likely to neglect this irksome and distasteful business. Consequently, he will scarcely ever know where he stands; he will put off the evil day of balancing his accounts, until it is forced upon him by some unexpected entanglement; and then, perhaps, he will be astounded at the discovery that he is really worth less than nothing.

Under the old-time hard-money system, there was less danger of such an issue, and a small tradesman might balance accounts between his

right and left breeches-pockets. But the introduction of a more remote representative of value than coin, or even bank-notes, has totally changed the situation of the trader. He cannot, by a mere inventory of his stock, or a glance at his strong-box and his bank-book, determine how he stands related to the great system of credit. The only index of this is found in his *accounts*. It is only in his *accounts* that he can assure himself that his house and stock are not his neighbour's. And if the said accounts have been suffered to go at sixes and sevens, it is plain that his knowledge of his own condition is no more than a shrewd guess.

I seriously believe that this is the actual condition of more than half the mechanics in the land: and it is an evil daily increasing with the recklessness of our speculations. The poor man drives on through thick and thin. The American motto, *Go ahead*, is written on his equipage. He flies over plain and valley, till at last, discovering that he is going down hill with perilous speed, he begins to think of putting on the drag, and moderating his rate of travel, when, all at once, he is cast over the precipice and dashed to pieces.

I have endeavoured to pen all my advices to mechanics, in full view of the remarkable fact, that in America the way is open for the humblest

working-man, by industry and enterprise, to become the head of a large establishment. Our greatest manufacturers are those who began life by hammering at little jobs. But consider, I pray you, how intricate and extensive are the accounts of one of these great concerns. Is it possible for a man to conduct such a business with the ordinary amount of knowledge in figures and book-keeping? Can he safely rely on the aids of mere clerks or hired accountants? It is true that many men, under the strong incitements of expected gain, meet the demands of their circumstances, and even late in life make themselves thoroughly acquainted with every detail of business; and these are the men who become wealthy, and continue so. But there are many more who never comprehend the calculations upon which their very gains are hinged; and these are the men who fail by scores even in the best of times.

Prevention is better than cure: the twig is bent more easily than the tree. Begin to get the mastery of these things in your youth, and you will smooth your way for life. Labour, by constantly repeated practice, at the operations of common arithmetic. Repeat every sort of example in the four fundamental rules, and in proportion, until you not merely understand them, but are prompt and expert in them, and you will

find the advantage of it every day that you live. Besides this, take the pains, under some good accountant, to become familiar with book-keeping. The mechanic has to keep his books, as well as the merchant. However small your business, it is best to do it in the right way, for then you will have nothing to unlearn when it becomes large. I believe it will be found that nine men out of every ten go through life with the methods which they adopted at the start. In other words, most mechanics pursue a method of book-keeping invented by themselves. This is to reject all the lights derived from the mercantile experience of ages. Scientific book-keeping is a time-saving, labour-saving, and money-saving contrivance; and you will find a few dollars laid out in acquiring it, as little lost as the grain of corn which you drop in the earth.

Let me close with a single question: *At what period of life do our mechanics learn the keeping of accounts?* Is it when they are apprentices? I have never known a master-workman to give any lessons of this kind. Is it when they are journeymen? Our journeymen are glad to earn and to spend money, but they keep few accounts. No: the little they half learn is taught them by the sad experience of actual business

XLI.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

History.

THE study of history has commended itself to considerate men of all ages, perhaps more generally than any branch of intellectual pursuit. Holding a middle place between mere entertainment and abstruse research, it has allured into its wide and variegated fields the curious and the reflecting of every different walk in life. And this is reasonable and easy of explanation. Often has it been said, till the sentence has grown into a proverb, that "history is philosophy teaching by example." Often have the words of the Roman orator been reiterated, that "not to know what happened before one was born, is to be always a child." If our great statesmen could be fairly questioned, it would be found that they have gained more concerning the principles of government from the story of former times, than from all their perusal of abstract treatises.

The American mechanic is a freeman; he is one of that people to whom we ascribe sove-

reignty. If independent in his way of thinking, he must needs be, to a certain extent, a politician. In point of fact, all men, of all vocations, in this country, undertake to talk about the measures of government, and to give some reason for their party-attachments and their votes. Here we find a good argument for the study of history by working-men.

But to this we must add other signal and acknowledged benefits, which flow from historical reading, whenever and by whomsoever pursued. It enlarges our knowledge of the world, and gives new views of human manners; it lifts us above the petty circle of our city or our state, and brings us into a felt relation to the great system of events; it affords a lively commentary on the happy or baneful tendencies of virtue and vice; and it displays in the most striking manner the wise and wonderful plans of Divine Providence.

Before the unhappy multiplication of novels and romances, young men sought their chief mental refreshment in historical reading; and there is cause for believing that by reason of this difference, the rising race is likely to be less acquainted with past events than their fathers were. A morbid taste for the excitements of romantic fiction has depraved many a mind, and in some measure placed history nearer than it once stood

to what are considered severe studies. Nevertheless, after having dreamed away golden hours over scores of novels, I am confident in saying, that, in the long run, history is more entertaining than romance. Truth, it has been said, is more interesting than fiction; and the more a man extends his reading, the deeper will be his conviction of this truth. Few men could spend a week in reading novels, and nothing else; but many men spend delightful months upon the annals of great events. It is an unconscious homage to this quality of authentic narrative, that some of our greatest novelists have chosen to interweave the events of true history in their most successful romances.

No patriotic American would willingly confess that he does not feel his soul more stirred by the unvarnished tale of revolutionary conflict, than by the exciting scenes of any fiction whatever; and the wonderful, unexpected, and rapid changes and convulsions of the French revolution, reach the passions with a mightier influence than all the feigned terrors of the tragic muse.

As we extend our reading of history, this interest, far from decreasing, grows exceedingly in strength; so that there is no branch of study which so uniformly gains upon the affections of its votaries. In the field of romance, the facti-

tious emotion becomes dull and dies away; but in historical researches, the studies of our youth continue to be the solace even of our old age.

It will be suitable for me to add a few suggestions as to the method in which history may be advantageously studied; and these shall be adapted to the case of such as are not surrounded by copious libraries.

First, Let it be observed, that no man in one lifetime can read all history; and that it is altogether undesirable to attempt any thing like this. Consequently, every thing depends upon wise selection, both as to subjects and authors. All history is not equally valuable to all; and time may be deplorably wasted over an annalist who is inaccurate, prolix, or obscure.

Secondly, Method is as important here as anywhere. By method in history, I simply mean "beginning at the beginning." Experience assures me that half our labour would be saved, if we would cross the stream nearer to its source, or assault the tree nearer to its root. My grand counsel, then, is this: *Begin with generals, and from these descend to particulars.* Proceed as the draughtsman does; first sketch a rapid outline, then fill in the minuter touches, and at length, if time permit, add the more delicate lights and shades. Or, in still plainer terms,

begin with some very brief and compendious, but clear and masterly view of general history ; such an aid we have in two invaluable and well-known works of Tytler. A good chronological chart would afford an outline still more general. Then proceed to gain a more familiar acquaintance, first with ancient, and afterwards with modern history.

Thirdly, Beware of the false supposition, that every part of your picture is to be filled up with equal care and minuteness. Where the plantation is vast, the wise planter cultivates in well-chosen spots. Be thankful that you are not called upon to know every thing. For example, the history of Carthage is less important than that of Rome ; the former, to most men, only as subsidiary to the latter : the one you will cursorily peruse ; to the other you will repeatedly resort through life. Again, the history of the German States may be adequately learned in an epitome : the history of England and America you will study in some detail. So again, in the case of a single country, you may very soon gain all you need about the British Heptarchy ; but you will dwell with assiduity and delight on the annals of the Reformation, the Civil Wars, and Revolution. And, above all, you will naturally, and with eagerness, peruse almost every book within your

reach, upon the subject of our own free institutions, and the struggles in which they had their birth.

Fourthly, With the cautions and provisions given above, after having mastered your outline of general history, you may safely consult your own pleasure, and read wherever you have a mind. When the canvass is once prepared and the great lines chalked out, it matters little whether the painter works upon the head of an Achilles, or the buckle of his armour—provided he keeps on working. Never did old Shakspeare speak more pregnant truth than when he said, “No profit grows where is no pleasure taken.” What we learn by snatches, in moments when the mind is warm and ductile, is most apt to leave abiding traces.

Lastly, Be not unduly perplexed with the vain effort to charge your memory with mere dates. One hour over a good chronological table will in this respect do more for you than months of study. Often recur to such a table or chart, and you will soon discover that the great cardinal and leading dates will fix themselves, without a separate endeavour.

XLII.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Chronology and Geography.

No man can be said to know any event, unless he knows *when* it happened and *where* it happened. The former he learns from chronology, the latter from geography; and thus it at once appears how truly these two sciences were called by an ancient, "the two eyes of history."

Chronology is one of those things which is exceedingly dry by itself, and which cannot be got by wholesale. A little familiarity with a chronological chart, table, or atlas, will be sufficient to give a general idea of the succession of great periods: particular dates are best learned by actual reference at the time of reading about the event to which they relate. In perusing history, take care to have by you a good collection of dates, and refer to these with regard to every important occurrence.* The more signal epochs

* Those who have money to spend, may purchase the valuable but expensive works of Blair, Le Sage, or Lavoisne. But I will name two books, which together will cost two dollars, and which contain all that a common reader will

will fix themselves in your minds without a separate effort; and it would be a waste of time and a burden on the mind, to set about the task of committing to memory lists of mere figures. It will of course happen, that the most important events will oftenest be referred to: and this repeated reference to the time of their occurrence will secure your recollection of the date. Thus, I remember that the deluge was about 2348 years before Christ; the Norman conquest, A. D. 1066, the Revolution, 1688; the Declaration of American Independence, July 4, 1776; and this without having set myself down to learn these as a lesson. By using a few such points of departure, one may, at any time, go a little back or a little forwards, and fix with sufficient approach to accuracy, the date of other events in the same period.

It is necessary to say something more about the other eye of history—that is, Geography—as being both more important and far more interesting. The man who reads history without geographical information, may be compared to a blind man playing chess. No wonder so many of our reading men have an obscure and con-

desire: first, an *Historical Atlas*, by J. E. Worcester, (containing twelve charts;) second, *Chronology*, or an Introduction and Index to Universal History, Biography, and Useful Knowledge. New-York, J. Leavitt, 1833, 12mo.

fused recollection of recorded events, when they hastened through the several narratives without ever discovering in what corner of the earth they took place. On the other hand, when you present to your imagination the exact scene of great exploits, following your hero on the map from country to country, and from town to town, you not only furnish a new association, as a crutch to memory, but you add life, interest, and reality to the transactions, and remember them more as one who has beheld than as one who has learned by hearsay.

Our schoolboy recollections of geography are odious. Such has been the absurd method of teaching it, that it is hard for many persons to overcome their disgust, or regard it as deserving the name of a science. The poor child was made to take an unintelligible book, full of technical terms, and, with little or no aid of map or globe, to get this by heart. Odd as this may seem to such of my young readers as live under a better dispensation, this is the way in which many of our old-fashioned hedge-schoolmasters used to teach geography. And the man who has learned it in no other way knows nothing about it.

In directing the mechanic how to acquire geographical information, perhaps my simplest

method will be to ask how one should endeavour to give this same information to a child or very ignorant person. It would be the best and shortest way, if it were practicable, to take the pupil some thousands of miles above our earth, and there to show him the countries and the seas, as the planet revolves upon its axis. But as it may be long before science can afford us such a facility, the next best course is to show the pupil the same thing in an humble imitation. Let the very first conceptions of geography be derived from the terrestrial globe. Here you will learn in such a manner that you need not unlearn; whereas there is a never-failing confusion in the mind which, after having conceived of the earth as depicted on a plane surface, vainly endeavours in after years to correct this false impression, and to imagine this parallelogram transmuted into a sphere. What I said of history I now say of geography: *Begin with generals, and from these descend to specifications and particulars.* Gain a comprehensive view, first of the grand divisions of the globe, and then of the principal countries; and do this from inspection of a globe, or, where this is wanting, of a good map; and, in the first instance, with little or no reference to the artificial lines of latitude and longi-

tude, or the numerical dimensions. You may proceed to fill up this outline from time to time.

It is impossible to recommend too strongly the practice of actually drawing rough maps. By this I do not mean copying from a map, but drafting from memory the outlines of any region which you may be studying. There is no other absolute test of accurate knowledge. Compare this with a correct map, and you will at a glance see where you are in error. Even those who have no experience in drawing may do this; and no instruments are needed but a slate or a black-board.

Still it must be remembered, that in a subject so boundless as this, we must expect to be learners all our life. The true maxim is—a little at a time, and often repeated. The grand secret for making a geographer is *perpetual reference*. When you read history or travels, never be without your map; and never pass any important name without seeking it out: the search will make you acquainted with many particulars besides that of which you are in quest, and the necessity for such reference will become less and less every day you live. If, on the other hand, you endeavour to store your mind with many geographical items at once, from lists of

uncouth names, without any interesting associations, you will be wearied and disgusted; one thing will jostle out another; and you will infallibly forget nine out of every ten. You must learn the situation and distances of places, just as a young salesman learns the prices of articles in a great assortment: not all at once, but as they come to hand. I would not forbid the perusal of geographical books; indeed, it is from these only that you can derive the facts of statistical and political geography; but the great matter is to know *where the spot is*, and this can be gained only from the map or globe.

The geography of our own extensive and growing country is of unspeakable importance to men in every line of business; ignorance here is really disgraceful. You will not, therefore, grudge the expense of a complete American Atlas; and after the labours of our distinguished countryman, Tanner, you need not be at a loss where to look.

Many persons are in the habit of denominating geography a dry study. When pursued after the ordinary method, it is such indeed; but when learned in connexion with interesting narrative and eventful travel, it becomes truly fascinating. This is so much the case, that to a man of va-

ried knowledge and lively imagination, there is scarcely any visible object which awakens more pleasing associations than a satisfactory map. The lines and points of the engraving are connected in his mind with a thousand stirring events, and the motley sheet spreads itself into a picture, variegated and enlivened with the achievements of ancient and modern story. Make but a fair trial, and you will arrive at the agreeable discovery, here as elsewhere, that all knowledge is sweet, and that within a prickly husk and a hard shell there lies a delicious kernel.

XLIII.

THE MECHANIC'S STUDIES.

Natural Philosophy and Chemistry.

THE man who lives in such a world of wonders as that which we inhabit, and in an age teeming with discoveries and inventions, especially if he is one who is daily called to the performance of those experiments which we call *working at a trade*, must be singularly incurious, if he can fail to inquire into the properties of matter, the relations of different substances, and the laws of motion and rest. All this is nothing else than physics, or natural philosophy. Of this, every man, whether he tries or not, knows something, and no man knows every thing. Here it is that we get into the regions of actual observation and experiment; which are always delightful to the inquisitive mind. Even without books, and without a teacher, many a man, like Franklin or Ferguson, has arrived at valuable discoveries by mere examination and random attempts. But it is a great advantage to begin with principles, to learn the laws which regulate all the changes in nature, and

to master in a brief and comprehensive manner, the discoveries of past ages. To make use of these scientific systems, is to avail ourselves of the ladder prepared to our hand, instead of trying to scale the almost impracticable crag by hands and feet alone.

The very name *mechanics* ought to have a charm for working-men. How is it possible for them to ply their tools, or even use their balance, without asking to know something about the laws of motion? Especially, how can they continue supine and blind, when they are told that the same great fundamental law brings the steel-yard to a poise, and whirls the planets in their orbits? The use of a common crow-bar brings into play the doctrine of the lever; the same is true of the sledge, forceps, and windlass-bar. But it is needless to particularize, where every thing is an illustration. No mechanic can apply himself to any act of his trade without exemplifying the laws of motion; and if men engaged in labour would but keep in mind those doctrines respecting forces which relate to the processes in which they are necessarily engaged, they would soon and pleasantly arrive at a competent knowledge of mechanics.

The direct and immediate value of natural philosophy, to those employed in mechanical labour,

is so obvious as almost to forbid further remark. In a great number of trades, the workman is actually engaged in making machines. The worth of these is precisely measured by their conformity to philosophical laws. Unless then the workman knows something about these laws, he must be a mere copyist, or at best a random experimenter. Any wheelwright or carriage-maker may indeed imitate a given model, and construct one vehicle exactly like another; but it is only the artificer who has studied principles, or gained some science, that can arrive at inventions, and suit his structure to emergencies, and meet the condition of new roads, new modes of draught, and peculiar dangers. The common builder needs an accurate acquaintance with all the topics concerning strength of materials, lateral pressure, the combination of forces at angular junctures, and the strain and support of arches. The clock or watch-maker, if more than a mere tinker, must add a little mathematics, and calculate the effects of complicated wheel-work, and the transmission of motion. The millwright and machinist must not be content to make his shafts and cogs and pinions, or to copy the gearing of those who lived before he was born; but he must know how and why all these changes are effected, and what alterations are rendered necessary by a change of

circumstances. The business of block-making, viewed in its principles, is almost a science by itself, involving whatever relates to pulleys, fixed and movable, the friction of cords, the operation of wheels, shafts, and rollers.

In every large factory, the mind of the inquiring lad will be attracted by the daily sight of the fly-wheel or the governor, to examine into the causes of unsteady motion, and the means of remedying it; the interference of power and resistance, where one is constant and the other variable; and the doctrine of virtual velocities; all which he will find to his heart's content, in the simplest treatise on mechanics. In every sort of employment which concerns dams, currents, aqueducts, pipes, pumps, or water in general, nothing can be done intelligently without some insight into hydrostatics and hydraulics. As to those numerous and important trades where the application of fire takes place in conducting processes, the philosophy of heat will render the most valuable aids: such is the case in all that concern the manufacture of metals and glass. And indeed there is scarcely a branch of human labour, even in those pursuits which seem farthest removed from scientific research, where we do not observe the direct increase of power derived from philosophical information.

But leaving out of view the mere profit of such knowledge, natural philosophy recommends itself to working-men as a cheap and accessible source of endless entertainment. No department of study affords such ample variety, and none awakens more enthusiasm. When we read the lives of great self-taught discoverers and inventors, we find that it was while in chase of amusement that they alighted on their highest attainments; zeal for the pursuit itself conducted them to their greatest gains. Consider the fervid perseverance of Ferguson and Franklin. Call to mind the barber's boy, *Richard Arkwright*, whose name is now associated with the boundless ramifications of the cotton manufacture. He began, it should seem, by amusing himself about the chimera of the perpetual motion; he next sought recreation in the shop of a clock-maker; he then entertained himself with constructing spinning-machines; he ended by becoming the acknowledged founder of a new fabric of national industry, at this time second to no other in the British empire. It was the entertaining character of mechanical experiment which beguiled the tedium of the way, and conducted Sir Richard Arkwright to wealth and honour. There is no part of science which recommends itself so strongly to mechanics of every sort, as natural philoso-

phy. Nearly allied to their daily pursuits, it offers a delightful refuge from the wearings of the burdened hours, and casts an elevating influence over the severest or dullest toil.

Mechanics of the more active classes enjoy one signal advantage over other men, in prosecuting the study of natural philosophy. Let me ask special attention to this remark. Their common employments make it easy for them to institute experiments, because, from their possession of materials, and their dexterity with tools, they are able, at once, to construct every kind of apparatus. The student at college, or even the professor, desires (we shall suppose) to put together a series of lenses or tooth-wheels, or to erect the model of some mill or other engine. This is necessary for his experiments. But he is a bungler at mechanical labour, and could scarcely build a decent wren-box: the carpenter, the joiner, the smith, the wheelwright, the turner, the watch-maker, on the contrary, can knock up such a contrivance in a few hours, without even thinking of it as a task. The same observation applies to chemical inquiries. There is no active mechanic, (of those strictly so called,) who might not with his own hands, with little expense, fit up in a shed or garret, a laboratory with apparatus sufficient for all the leading experiments in physics

and chemistry. And if two or three, of different trades, would combine, this might be accomplished with completeness and elegance. Will not some half dozen of my young mechanical readers take the hint?

All that has been said about natural philosophy is equally true, with a trifling change of terms, in relation to chemistry. This science regards not the general, but the particular properties of bodies; with respect to their mixture with one another, mutual influence, temperature, weight, and minor peculiarities. The truths of chemistry are involved in every operation of the painter, the dyer, the tanner, the druggist, the distiller, the baker, the confectioner, and in innumerable others. Indeed there is no trade, not even that of the tailor or the shoemaker, in which chemistry does not play a part. Its revelations are at once charming and stupendous, and the science is in its full career of discovery at this moment. The great majority of experiments in chemistry may be performed with apparatus which any joiner is competent to put together. With such inducements, it is really wonderful that young working-men are not more generally attached to this subject. The young apothecary, *Humphrey Davy*, began his brilliant course with perhaps as little external in-

dication of success as that which is offered to the humblest reader of these lines.

In regard to the studies of working-men, I was recently much instructed by some hints from one of the most distinguished natural philosophers of our country. He gave it as the result of his observation, that self-taught and aspiring mechanics often fail from the neglect of a single caution. The caution is simply this, that they should not attempt premature discoveries or inventions in general science, or in departments remote from their own trades, but should sedulously cultivate such branches of science as facilitate their particular handicraft. Very important discoveries have been made by mechanics, but these have not been so much in general science as in the proper field of the discoverer's own pursuit. By a wise application of philosophy, the artisan may alight upon valuable and labour-saving processes in his own business. On the other hand, some working-men have exposed themselves to ridicule or commiseration, by vaunting as discoveries those things which are absurd, exploded, or long since recorded in scientific works.

With these remarks, I earnestly recommend to mechanics that source of enjoyment which they will find in the natural sciences.

XLIV.

THE MECHANIC'S LIBRARY.

ALMOST every mechanic who can read at all, has some books ; in other words, possesses a library. In going from house to house, I have frequently amused myself with taking a brief inventory of these little collections. In many houses, pretty well furnished as to other things, one will find on a shelf, sideboard, or mantel, some such collection as the following : The Almanac, The New and Complete Dream-Book, The Universal Songster, Life of George Burrowes, Gray's Complete Farrier, half a spelling-book, and a dusty, incomplete New Testament, together with a dozen worn-out and odd volumes of other works.

When there are two ways of doing a thing, and the right way is as cheap and easy as the wrong, why should men be left to go astray ? Let me get the attention of the apprentice or young tradesman on this point. I can, perhaps, save him much expense, and the still greater evil of having a worthless article. He will, perhaps,

be ready to complain that books are dear, that he is poor, and that many books only confuse him. Observe, therefore, I do not recommend many books, nor costly books, nor a number at once. All I want is, that you should lay out wisely the very sum, or a mere trifle above the sum, which you would otherwise lay out foolishly. Pray be not too proud to learn of one who has already made mistakes, and got a little experience.

One great mistake of young working-men in the purchase of their books is, that they get them by chance. They take no advice, and use no foresight. The book they buy is not so much the one they need, as the one that offers at the stall, auction, or pedler's basket. Another mistake is, the purchase of certain books merely because they are low-priced. This is an error which you would laugh at in a schoolboy, if he were buying wares in your shop: take care lest he have cause to laugh at you in return. The cheap books are in the long run far the dearest. They are usually on poor paper, in poor type, and poor binding, and too often are but poor stuff through and through. Instead of following mere hazard, lay it down as your maxim, to know beforehand what particular books you need, and to buy just these in preference to any others. What should you think of a carpenter who should purchase

any tool or material which he might fall in with, while the indispensable utensils and staple articles of his bench were wanting? Books are to the reading man both tools and material. If you say that you cannot indulge in many, I reply, very true, and, for that very reason, see to it that they be the best. In order to prevent error, proceed as you would do if you were purchasing some new material with which you had not been very familiar. You are, I will suppose, a coach-maker in the country. You are desirous of introducing a variety of gum-elastic fabric for tops, which you have never used yourself. When you go to New-York, or Philadelphia, or Boston, for your materials, you naturally walk round to the manufactory of Messrs. A, or B, and make inquiries, and, perhaps, ask the aid of their more practised eye in choosing. Do the same in the book-line. Seek the advice of some bookish man; and however little he may know about your business, trust him in his own.

Another mistake of young book-buyers is, the supposition that they must fill their book-shelf at one stroke. He who does this will almost always buy some trash. It takes time to read books; it take time to find out what books to read. Lay aside a certain portion of earnings for books; let it be sacredly set apart for this

object. Next keep a list of such books as you think you need : examine this from time to time ; add to it and take from it. Then seek good advice of a friend, as to the best place to buy the book you most need, the best edition for your purpose, and the fair price. I have bought and sold books, and have seen many buy and sell them, and I am convinced that working-men lose a greater proportion of what they lay out on cheap books than of any other disbursement they make.

Perhaps there are readers of these counsels, who are ready to ask for a list of books proper to constitute a mechanic's library. There are people, perhaps, who would freely draught you such a catalogue at a sitting : but it is a responsibility which I dare not assume. To make out such a list for every one, would be almost as quack-like as to prescribe the same pills for every disease. I know what would suit me, and what would suit this or that neighbour ; but to recommend for any given individual, one should know his age, his temper, his talents, his tastes, his acquirements, and even his trade. I prefer, therefore, the method of naming a few books and classes of books, which may be got from time to time with advantage, adding some running comments.

The Bible should stand first in every list: not a heavy, square volume, on the parlour table, too pretty to use, too heavy to carry, and chiefly valuable as a register of the births and deaths; but a real book for use, of large print, and solid materials. But I have spoken elsewhere of this. A good English dictionary, of large size, is indispensable. Wiser men may do without this; but there is scarcely a day in which I do not look for the meaning of some word. And until I see a better, I shall use Walker's Critical Pronouncing Dictionary. The laws of your State, and the necessary forms of common legal processes, and the Constitution of the United States, should be in your shelves. Bayard on the Constitution of the United States is an admirable little book. In your own particular trade, you should have one or two of the best treatises.

For pleasant historical reading, all your life long, you cannot go amiss among such works as these, viz: Tytler's Universal History, Josephus, Plutarch's Lives, Goldsmith's England, Sir Walter Scott's little histories of France and Scotland, Ramsay's History of the American Revolution. To these may be added some history of the church, and good biographies of Penn, Washington, and Franklin.

For poetry, which is quite as necessary and as lovely as prose, buy Milton, Pope, Young; Thomson, Cowper, Campbell, Bloomfield, Montgomery, Hemans, and Wordsworth; and take care to procure large, fair copies, in good condition, even if they cost you twice as much. A poem is a piece of furniture for life, and you will wish to take it on jaunts with you, to read it out of doors, and to refresh yourself with it in old age.

The publications of the Society in England for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, so far as I can judge, are the best and the cheapest books for working-men that the world has ever seen. Their "Library of Useful Knowledge" gives you the whole round of science; and you may get any particular part by itself. Their "Library of Entertaining Knowledge" is a most instructive as well as most amusing series. Their "Penny Cyclo-pedia," and especially their "Penny Magazine," are incomparable family books. I hope nothing may ever occur to change my opinion, as at present I regard the mere pictures of these works as fully worth the whole cost, and cordially recommend them to the shelves of every mechanic. With the exception of moral and religious reading, and purely American subjects, there is

scarcely any topic excluded from these works. In religion, it is scarcely necessary to name the following works, which Christians of almost every persuasion have approved: The Imitation of Christ, by Thomas à Kempis; Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, Baxter's Saint's Rest, Mason on Self-Knowledge, and Watts on the Improvement of the Mind, which is as good in directing the morals as the studies of the youthful reader. I cannot dwell on books of mere entertainment. Biography, and voyages and travels, have worn the best with me.

Let me close these desultory hints by declaring my belief, that, for the youth and children of a family, it would not be possible to lay out the sum of thirty-three dollars to greater advantage, than by purchasing the Library prepared and for sale by the American Sunday-school Union. It contains one hundred and twenty-one volumes. These are uniformly bound, and all ready for use, in a neat and convenient book-case, which forms a striking ornament in the houses of many economical book-buyers. The reader needs only to see it to be convinced.

In all that precedes, I have written with reference to young men just entering on a course of improvement, and somewhat straitened in their

means. More learned and more wealthy persons will smile at the simplicity and scantiness of my recommendations; but even these books, well pondered, and often re-perused, may lay the foundation of great and accurate erudition.

XLV.

THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE.

It will be readily believed by my readers, that I am not disposed to undervalue any kind of real knowledge, or any description of books. Much of my labour has been intended to awaken in the apprentice and the journeyman a desire for varied information. I have recommended philosophy ; I have recommended history ; I have recommended books of entertainment. For this reason I trust I shall be credited, when I further say, that there is no philosophy, no history, no entertainment, equal to that of the Bible. This is not only my own opinion, after reading for many years, and in several languages, but it is the deliberate opinion of many of the greatest scholars and wisest philosophers that ever lived.

Some forty or fifty years ago, another sentiment prevailed among many people. It became fashionable to ridicule the Scriptures, to represent them as exploded old-wives'-fables. This was chiefly owing to the spread of French opinions, which gained ground among us in consequence

of our sympathy with an oppressed people, who were supposed to be in search of rational liberty. The writings of Voltaire, Rousseau, Volney, and Paine propagated these ignorant, false, and malicious objections against the Bible, and long after the atheism and bloodshed of the French revolution revealed the true tendency of these opinions, there were some even among our leading politicians, who upheld and preached them.

The case is happily altered. Here and there we may meet with some gray-headed and perhaps doting old man, who, parrot-like, rehearses the absurd chimeras of Volney, or the ribaldry of Paine; or some young mechanic, who, despairing of any virtuous notoriety, tries to distinguish himself by railing at religion. But these cases are rare. Deism and atheism are no longer the mode, even among wicked men.

It is undoubtedly true, that we occasionally find in our cities an infidel club, or an infidel book-shop. If the reader will take the pains to observe these closely for a series of months, he will find the following statements to be true. First, these clubs are composed of men who have little stake in society, and little permanent interest in the place where they live, being sometimes foreigners, often strangers or new-comers, and always persons of low character and bad habits. Secondly,

the members of these associations, and the keepers of these shops, it will be observed, change very often. You will not see many of the same faces where you saw them a twelvemonth ago. They are short-lived lights, like those of brimstone matches. Thirdly, if you trace these people to their homes, you will find them discontented and wretched, and you will learn that they almost invariably come to some bad end.

Let the Holy Scriptures have more of your time than all other books. It is the oldest book in the world: surely you would like to know what is recorded of the early ages of our race. It is the most entertaining book in the world. Even Voltaire confessed that there was nothing equal for pathos to the story of Joseph. Of like interest are the histories of Abraham, of David, and especially of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is the book of greatest wisdom; even if by the term be understood worldly-prudence. It is the only book which gives us any certain knowledge of the future. Is it possible for a man to be so sunk in sensuality, or so brutalized, as not to care to know what shall happen to his immortal part after death? The Bible will give you this knowledge. Moreover, it is the only work which can authoritatively teach you how to escape the punish-

ment of sin, and how to attain the perfection of your nature.

Take pains to have in your possession a good copy of the whole Bible, in a fair large type, and in a convenient form. I lay stress on these last particulars, because many people, for the sake of saving a few shillings, purchase Bibles of cheap and inferior execution. If the book is unwieldy, you will seldom open it: if it is in small print, you will instinctively avoid it, when the light is imperfect, or when your eyesight fails. The best and cheapest editions are in large octavo, and are published by the American Bible Society, and also by the Friends' Bible Association. At the same time, every one should have a Bible sufficiently portable to be carried on journeys; and every member of a family should possess his own.

The following rules may be useful in the study of the Scriptures:

1. *Read the Bible as the word of God.* Never forget whence it comes. Endeavour to feel that it is a message from heaven, and that your Creator is speaking to you. And, as you read, implore the help of its divine Author, to open your understanding, and keep you from error.

2. *Read the Bible diligently; attentively; with faith and obedience.* Perhaps you read the Scriptures. But in what way? Much depends on this. Some people read them more carelessly and with less pleasure than the morning's paper.

3. *Read the Bible every day.* However much pressed you may be for time, you may snatch from sleep or labour time enough for a chapter in the Old and a chapter in the New Testament.

4. *Read the Bible in regular course.* By doing this, you will not be in danger of remaining entirely ignorant of certain parts. The portions skipped by people who open anywhere and read at random, are often the most important parts.

5. *Employ every means within your reach to get the true and full meaning of what you read.* If you have learned and wise and religious friends, ask their aid. If you have a good commentary, make occasional use of it; if you have not, lay aside a few cents a week until you get one. Especially use the Bible itself as a commentary; make one place explain another. The Jews have a saying, that there is no obscure text in the Bible which has not some light thrown on it from some other text. In order to get this light, take care to have a Bible with the marginal notes and

references, which were made by the translators.

6. *Make the Bible your study for life.* The ancient Romans used to say, proverbially, "Beware of a man of one book:" that is, such a man will be too wise for you. The meaning was, that the perpetual re-perusal and meditation of a single work gave a special exercise and vigour to the human powers. This is true of the one book I am commending. I am persuaded, that if a man in trade were to read every day in every month one of the thirty-one chapters into which the Book of Proverbs is divided, he would never find one day in which some saying of the wisest of kings would not prove useful to him, even in his worldly business.*

* The reader is informed that several thoughts in this essay will be found more fully explained and illustrated, in a cheap little volume, published in Philadelphia, under the title, *THE SCRIPTURE GUIDE; a familiar introduction to the study of the Bible.*

XLVI.

THE MECHANIC'S RELIGION.

So large a part of the American nation is made up of mechanics, that the opinions, feelings, and lives of this one class will give character to the whole people of the land. If our working-men are virtuous and religious, we shall be a happy country. I have taken some pains, in the preceding essays, to set before my friends of the labouring classes, the unspeakable value of sound education. I now have to add a qualifying remark of very great importance. Mere knowledge, without morality, will never make a nation prosperous. Science and literature may be possessed, and have been possessed, by some of the worst men that ever lived. Knowledge is power; but in the hands of the wicked it is power to do evil. We may multiply books, and multiply schools, and pass laws for education, until there shall not be an uneducated child in all the land; but unless we also provide for the moral culture of the rising race, these means will be the instruments of our destruction. 'The horrors of the

French revolution, which have put back the course of free principles a hundred years, took place in no rude or ignorant corner of the earth ; and some of the incarnate demons who presided at the guillotine and the drownings, were among the most intelligent and learned of their day. No, let the truth sink deeply, education to be a blessing, must be education for the future—for the immortal state—for eternity.

To leave generals, and come down to individual cases, the American mechanic should be a virtuous, upright, and benevolent man. I know nothing but true Christianity which will ensure this. Infidels have tried their hand at meliorating the condition of the labouring class ; they have had no effect but to make them conceited, radical, violent, discontented, factious, and idle. I could wish that every mechanic had a copy of the "Radical's Saturday Night," by Professor Wilson. The doctrines, precepts, and examples of the Bible afford the only available rules for happiness. These it is which have thrown so holy a light over the cottage of the Swiss, the Scot, and the New-Englander of former days.

In recommending religion, let me not be understood as recommending this or that sect. The Christian army is divided into many battalions, differing in their name, uniform, colours, watch-

words, and tactics: while they agree in recognising the same master, and fighting for the same cause, against the same foe, and with the same arms. The reader of these pages, with the Bible in his hand, has already chosen for himself, or ought to do so without delay. In regard to this choice I would not interfere. Not that I am indifferent; on the contrary, my own convictions are strong; but it is no part of my plan to make proselytes, or even to betray my partialities. The grand object of this paper will be attained, if I can persuade the reader to join himself to the number of true Christians. And I am willing to describe the true Christian in the words of Chief Justice Hale, that ornament as well of the bench as of the church of England.

“He who fears the God of heaven and earth,” such is Judge Hale’s description of the good man, “walks humbly before him, thankfully lays hold of the message of redemption by Jesus Christ, and strives to express his thankfulness by the sincerity of his obedience. He is sorry with all his soul when he comes short of his duty. He walks watchfully in the denial of himself, and holds no confederacy with any lust or known sin. If he falls in the least measure, he is restless till he has made his peace by true repent-

ance. He is true to his promises, just in his dealings, charitable to the poor, sincere in his devotion. He will not deliberately dishonour God, although secure of impunity ; he hath his hopes and his conversation in heaven, and dares not do any thing unjustly, be it ever so much to his advantage ; and all this because he loves him, and fears him, as well for his goodness as his greatness.

“ Such a man,” continues Hale, “ whether he be an Episcopalian or a Presbyterian, an Independent, or an Anabaptist ; whether he wears a surplice or wears none ; whether he hears organs or hears none ; whether he kneels at the communion, or for conscience sake stands or sits ; he has the life of religion in him ; and that life acts in him, and will conform his soul to the image of his Saviour, and go along with him to eternity, notwithstanding his practice or non-practice of things indifferent.

“ On the other hand, if a man fears not the eternal God ; if he can commit sin with presumption, drink excessively, swear vainly or falsely, cozen, lie, cheat, break his promises, live loosely ; though at the same time he may be studious to practise every ceremony with a scrupulous exactness, or may, perhaps, as stubbornly oppose

them; though he should cry down bishops or cry down presbytery; though he fasts all Lent, or feasts out of pretence of avoiding superstition; yet, notwithstanding these and a thousand more external conformities, or zealous opposition of them—he wants the life of religion.”

It is impossible to conceive of greater folly than that of the man who pleads want of time, or hurry of business, in justification of his neglect of religion. It is bartering the greatest interest away for nothing; losing eternity for the chances of a moment.

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